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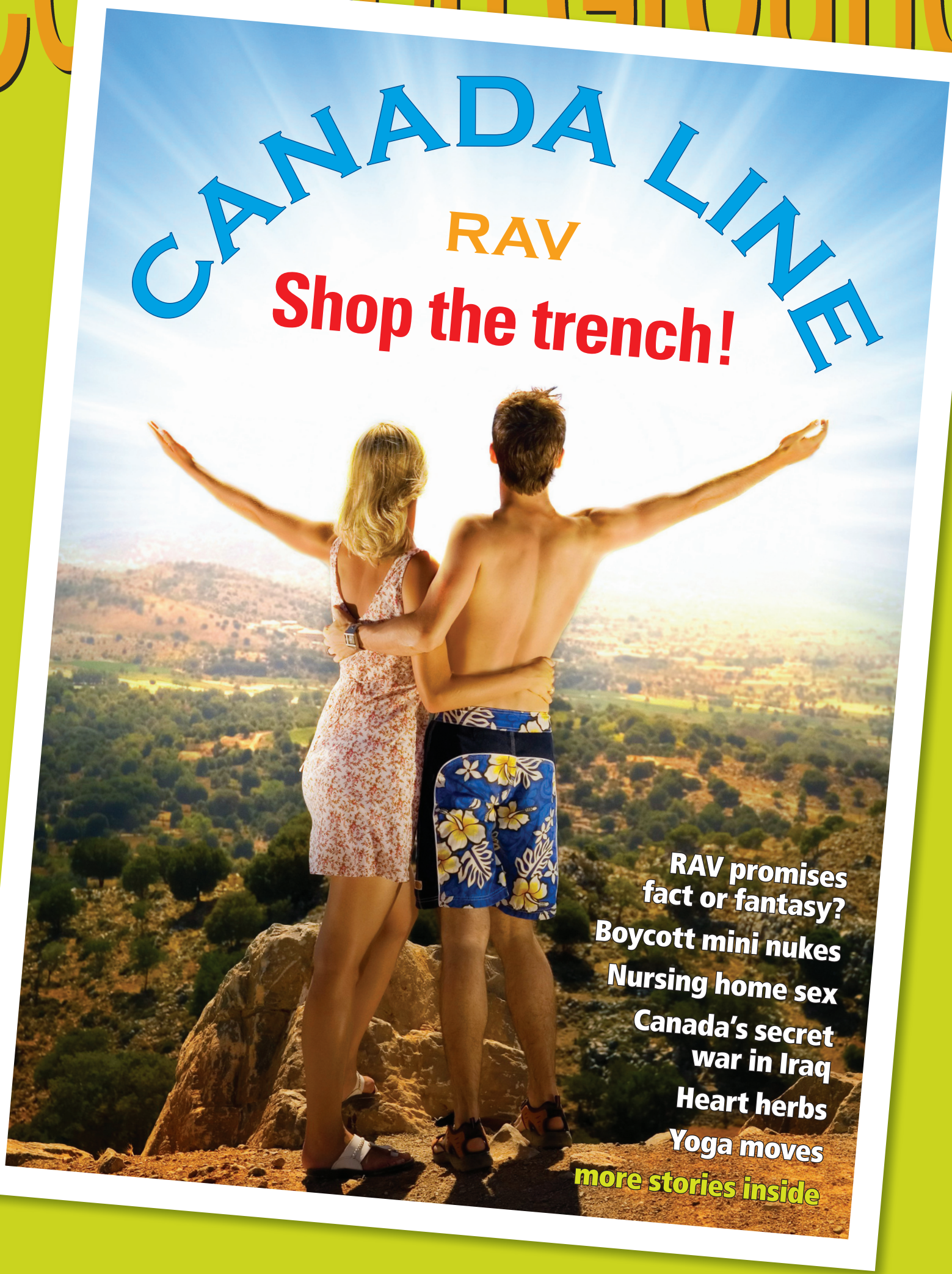

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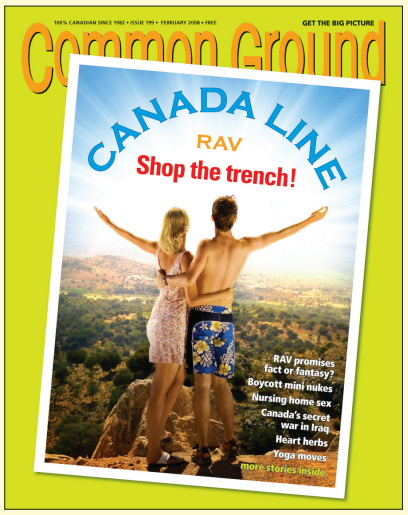

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herbs for a healthy heart

by Trisha Coleman CHT, RH

While heart disease is the result of a variety of factors, the good news is that in many cases it is preventable. The risk of heart disease can be dramatically reduced by changes to one's diet and lifestyle, including regular exercise, quitting smoking, stress reduction, maintaining a healthy body weight and eating a diet rich in heart-friendly foods.

Herbs can provide a safe, gentle and effective approach to the prevention and treatment of heart disease. Like all medicines, herbal remedies must be treated with respect and used with care. Because there is always the potential risk of interactions with other medication, self-medication is not recommended. It is always a good idea to consult with a professional trained herbal practitioner prior to beginning any herbal regimen.

Herbs affect the cardiovascular system in different ways and taking a particular herb could have the following positive impact:

• Increased heart beat strength and normalization of the rate of the beat.

• Increased efficiency of each heart beat and a reduction of the amount of oxygen required by the heart muscle. This allows the heart to effectively pump blood around the body and to reduce fluid build-up in the lungs as well as swelling of the extremities.

• Dilation of the blood vessels, which stimulates circulation and lowers blood pressure; many heart problems arise because of a deficiency of blood supply due to a blockage in the arteries that supply the heart itself (coronary arteries).

Some herbs are known as cardio-tonics. These herbs nourish and increase the overall health of the heart and improve the function of the cardiac muscle. It is not completely understood how cardio-tonics exert their beneficial effects on the body, but herbs such as hawthorn, garlic and motherwort have long been in the herbalist's repertoire for heart problems.

Hawthorn berries, leaves, flowers (*Crataegus oxyacantha*)

Hawthorn is one of the herbalist's most important heart remedies. It may be used for any cardiac condition and is a key herb for angina pectoris.

Hawthorn can help regulate arrhythmia or an irregular heart rate due to its toning support of the electrical activity of the heart. The coronary arteries are those that directly supply the heart muscle itself with blood and oxygen. Sometimes these arteries become blocked or narrowed reducing the blood flow to the heart causing many problems, including angina. Hawthorn dilates these coronary arteries allowing sufficient blood, oxygen and essential nutrients to reach the heart, keeping it healthy. When used on a regular basis, hawthorn has the benefit of producing a stronger, more efficient heart beat.

Hawthorn is rich in phytonutrients, known as flavonoids. Flavonoids provide support to the vascular system helping to improve the strength and integrity of blood vessels. The antioxidant effect of hawthorn is the result of its flavonoid content. Its antioxidant action protects the heart from damaging free radicals, which cause cellular damage and are a common result of vascular disease, such as atherosclerosis.

Garlic (*Allium sativum*)

For thousands of years, garlic has been used as both food and a medicine to help prevent heart disease. Numerous studies have shown that it supports the cardiovascular system, helps lower high cholesterol and decreases the risk factors for developing atherosclerosis, a disease that leads to high blood pressure and other serious heart problems. It may also help decrease fatty deposits on blood vessels and has a mild blood thinning effect. It is important to note that garlic has only a mild effect on thinning the blood and it is not strong enough to effectively replace anti-clotting drugs; it is best used as a preventative.

Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*)

Bilberry is one of the best herbs for improving the strength and integrity of the blood vessels. It is an effective antioxidant that provides protection against cellular damage and it contains phytonutrients called Anthocyanidins which are protective to the vascular system. They help to protect capillaries from damage and stimulate the repair mechanisms of damaged vessels making capillaries stronger and more resistant to injury. The anthocyanidins work to encourage the normal constriction and dilatation of arteries, while helping to maintain normal blood pressure and regulate the permeability of capillary walls. In other words, they control the amount of fluid leaving and entering the blood stream, which helps reduce swelling that is often associated with heart problems. They assist in keeping the blood vessels in the eye healthy and may provide protection against damage caused by other conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, etc. Bilberry is also an effective antioxidant that provides protection against cellular damage from damaging free radicals.

Cayenne (*Capsicum minimum*)

Cayenne pepper has long been known for its ability to "get the blood moving." It is an excellent circulatory stimulant, helping to increase blood flow to the extremities by dilating the blood vessels in the arms and legs. Cayenne is very effective at reducing inflammation which may be beneficial for certain CVS conditions, such as atherosclerosis. Cayenne has traditionally been used to improve blood supply to the heart muscle itself, ensuring that it receives optimal oxygen and nutrients.

Mistletoe (*Viscum album*)

Mistletoe is one of the best herbs to take for lowering blood pressure, attributed to the fact that it is very effective at dilating blood vessels, allowing the circulatory system to accommodate a larger volume of blood. It is a cardio-tonic herb and can help one regain a normal pulse if the heart is beating too quickly. Mistletoe is a very powerful herb and should be used with caution.

Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*)

Motherwort's effects on both the nervous system and cardiovascular system greatly compliment each other. It is known for its ability to relax the nervous system, helping to reduce stress that may be causing, or aggravating, high blood pressure.

White Willow Bark (*Salix alba*)

White willow bark was the original source of the drug known today as Aspirin or acetyl-salicylic acid (ASA). There is much conflicting information about whether or not white willow bark has a blood thinning effect. It naturally contains salicin, which is converted into salicylates in the body; however, salicin is not known to thin the blood. It is acetyl-salicylic acid (ASA), which is synthetically derived in a laboratory and sold as aspirin that has blood thinning effects.

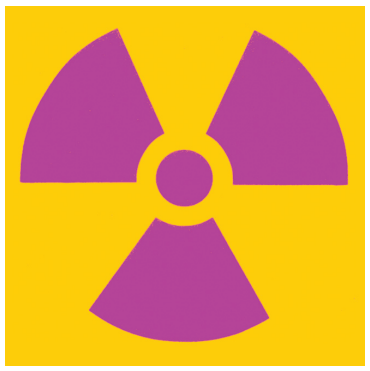
The quantity of salicin in white willow bark is very low and one would have to ingest several litres of tea to obtain the equivalent of a daily dose of aspirin. (500mg of aspirin is equal to 794 mg of salicin which equates to more than 88 grams of white willow bark!) However, if a person is taking high doses of a prescription blood thinner medication or any NSAID drugs, it is recommended that they consult with their doctor and natural health practitioner to avoid any adverse reactions as willow may increase the effects of these medications. White willow bark has a powerful anti-inflammatory effect and helps to reduce pain. The anti-inflammatory action makes it useful in the prevention and treatment of some cardiovascular conditions which are the result of damaged, inflamed blood vessel walls.

Trisha Coleman is a clinical herbal therapist, writer and lecturer with a herbal practice in Brandon, Manitoba.

Boycott Toshiba's mini nukes

by Russell Hoffman

Toshiba, known worldwide for its electronic products, plans to build "small" (room-sized), fully-automated nuclear reactors, a mere 1/5000th the size of existing boiling water reactors (BWRs) and pressurized water reactors (PWRs), which are old, massive and deteriorating. Did I also mention unsafe? Size notwithstanding, each of the new reactors will still contain enough lethal poison to wipe out a city. Toshiba plans to bring the first of the new reactors online in Japan this year, with Europe and America following in 2009.



Techno-nerds' reactions to the new reactors on the Internet would make you think these were puppy dog friendly, could-never-harm-a-flea energy sources, but the articles are written by computer "geeks," who know nothing about nuclear waste issues, terrorism or economics. They just love the idea of "unlimited" cheap power, but they need to look a little deeper under the hood before they endorse these things.

It takes approximately 800 to a thousand people to operate one of today's nuclear reactors, which, on average, produces one megawatt of electricity per employee. In startling contrast, Toshiba's proposed reactors will supposedly be completely automatic. No one will operate them and no one will guard them.

According to the optimistic manufacturer, an apartment complex will be guaranteed steady power for up to 40 years. The cost, per reactor, is rumoured to be about $3.5 million. After 40 years, not only will the fuel have to be stored for millions of years, but the entire reactor will have to be isolated from humanity – on a finite planet with limited resources. In its press releases, Toshiba makes no mention of future plans for storage.

Even after 60 years, tens of billions of dollars and thousands of the world's best scientific brains puzzling the matter, we are still no closer to knowing what to do with radioactive waste because it destroys any container it is stored in. Toshiba hasn't solved that problem because the manufacturer can't perform miracles. The nuclear waste problem is unsolvable at the atomic level, yet the nuclear industry continues to create more waste, with the false promise that a solution is just around the corner. It isn't. In the US, Yucca Mountain isn't a safe and proper solution and nothing else is even being considered.

The energy source used in the new Toshiba reactors is a uranium-based fuel used by most nuclear power plants, which, of course, should also all be closed down in favour of alternative energy sources. While renewable energy solutions are available, affordable and effective and could generate real profit for corporations, they don't make millions for large utilities.

A properly thought-out, renewable energy system would rely upon thousands of small sources of energy, and could, therefore, be very reliable even if some of those sources shut off for parts of every day. It should be illegal for utilities to refuse to purchase renewable energy at fair prices. The Toshiba baby-nukes will rely on a closed-loop, liquid sodium primary coolant system, instead of water. The manufacturer claims that reservoirs of Lithium-6 are used to stop the reactor if necessary. Note: Sodium ignites when exposed to air.

Firefighters will have to treat a Toshiba pocket-reactor fire completely differently than how they have been trained or are capable of handling. Worse, the Toshiba reactors can be blown up by a bomb.

continued on p. 22

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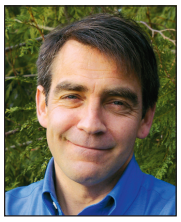

Media mum on bad news drugs

DRUG BUST *Alan Cassels*

HEALTH

People obsessed with certain issues – the environment, poverty, healthcare, or, in my case, pharmaceutical issues – tend to think their issue is *the* big issue. It's the one that's worth society's close attention, important enough to demand rigorous public debate and worthy of extensive media coverage, to promote the public's understanding.

We obsessed people will always complain that our issues never seem to get the balanced and thorough reporting that they deserve. We'll argue that reporters are ill-informed and the media outlets they work for never give them enough time to chase the story.

CanWest Global is a corporate behemoth that pumps its favoured policies through its 11 daily newspapers and 16 TV stations. Could this be why important drug issues, which could affect pharma's profits, are missing in action in media reporting in BC?

With the growth of media on the internet, these stories are sometimes brought to life, even as the mainstream press grows increasingly MIA – "Missing in Action" – or produces coverage that is DOA – "Dead on Arrival."

On the drug file, those mainstream journalists will disagree with me. "We cover drugs all the time in our pages," they'll say, pointing to their bulging lifestyle sections, oozing stories about health, diets and drugs. True enough. But from my perspective, much of what gets reported in the drug world seems to come from the extreme ends of the spectrum – the breakthrough drug stories or the heart-stopping drug disasters – leaving the large bulge of pharmaceutical issues in the middle untouched, especially those that affect many of us in a serious, day-to-day way.

Let's face it; about two thirds of our visits to doctors end with a prescription, making drug-taking the number one form of health care in our world. And because we swallow a ton of them, the way drugs are approved, covered, prescribed, dispensed and swallowed are all subjects worthy of intense public scrutiny and debate.

In BC, some very important drug stories recently have been reported on either marginally or not at all, even though they have the potential to hugely impact the people in this province.

In December, a shocking *New England Journal* study was released, stating that the majority (88 percent) of the clinical trials which showed that antidepressants don't work, either were not published in medical journals or were presented as positive findings. Given that hundreds of thousands of people in BC take these drugs daily – a quarter of them women between the ages of 25 and 45 – why was there no coverage? And how about a recent study that found that tens of thousands of seniors with dementia in long term care in Canada are prescribed extremely expensive and very toxic atypical antipsychotic drugs (drugs like Zyprexa and Seroquel) even when Health Canada has issued stern warnings that those drugs increase the risk of death in seniors? If you don't religiously listen to *CBC* radio or read the *Epoch Times*, you'll have missed this story entirely.

In terms of the politics of health care, is there a good excuse for a media outlet to miss a story that could have huge reverberations in BC for decades to come? In my opinion, the winner of the "Missing in Action" prize for the least reported important story is the recent announcement of a BC pharmaceutical task force stacked with drug industry cheerleaders. This would fit the man-bites-dog category of news story and should have generated headlines across the province, demanding the ministry to justify its choice of panel members.

Did it? Not at all.

Maybe it's not so bad that five of the seven non-government appointees to the panel are embedded in an industry whose very existence depends on – how can I say this nicely? – extracting maximum returns from taxpayer-funded drug programs. These panel members include a board member of LifeSciences BC, a lobby group for a whole whack of drug companies and Russell Williams, head of Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D), the nation's key drug lobby group, and a representative from a drug store chain. The panel's mandate is to "provide innovative ideas for the minister's consideration" and to "optimize the decision-making process for what drugs are covered under PharmaCare." Whew! The future of a billion dollar drug plan handed off to pharma's suits? Sweet.

This affair smells a bit stinky and the panel is akin to having a government-appointed committee, comprised mostly of reps from Labatt, Seagram and Absolut, advising on liquor taxes. I'm sure it is staffed with men and women of integrity who will do a good job providing the answers the minister needs.

Listening to the prescriptions offered by the captains of the drug industry might not be a bad thing, and it's most likely to produce a pill so sour and indigestible (given the panel's dubious composition) that the recommendations will be, like Victoria's sewage, flushed so deep that no one will ever have to see or smell them. That is, of course, if the public ever hears of the outcome of this task force. But given our MIA media, that's not a sure thing.

The panel's existence was only reported in a single piece on CKNW radio and in two pieces of the feisty online media source, *The Tyee* (www.thetyee.ca) As far as I could tell, it didn't see the light of day in any of the mainstream press outlets. It wasn't a story without colour. Commentators, such as the NDP's health critic Adrian Dix, called the composition of the board "highly debatable." Words such as "shocking," "unbelievable," "disturbing," "extraordinary" and "bizarre" were among the adjectives chosen by other critics describing the panel. I added "bewildering" to the list.

Decisions made by the panel could shape the decision-making of our provincial pharmacare programs for decades, so why wasn't it covered in the mainstream press?

I've raised that question with some of the brightest and hardest working journalists in BC, knowing all the while reporters are a little defensive about the stories they didn't cover. A variety of theories emerge, some revolving around newsroom hubris, others pointing to the lack of time and energy mainstream journos can put into a story, while others talk about the complicated nature of the story, even while admitting it's an important one that needs to be aired.

One is left to hypothesize why the media won't touch the story – rather than wonder why the Health Minister would stack the deck of such a task force.

We can all guess at the government's motivation, but here's one theory you won't hear much about: CanWest Global Communications Corp., which owns most of the daily papers in Canada, including BC's three main papers, the *Vancouver Province*, the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Victoria Times Colonist*, is currently suing the federal government over Health Canada's laws which restrict direct-to-consumer advertising of pharmaceuticals. Seems that the Aspers are salivating over a big bite of the $400 million worth of estimated ad revenue they could get from the drug companies to run drug ads in their various media. Wouldn't want to piss off a prospective client like that, would you?

CanWest Global is only one example of the problem with media concentration in Canada. It is a corporate behemoth that pumps its favoured policies (like war in Afghanistan) through its 11 daily newspapers and 16 TV stations. Could this be why important drug issues, which could affect pharma's profits, are missing in action in media reporting in BC?

Adbusters magazine calls Vancouver "… the single-most media concentrated city in the Western world." The *Vancouver Sun* used to do some very hard-hitting stories on the pharmaceutical industry, but not anymore. Perhaps their journalists are a little leery of pissing off the corporate owners and thus tend to steer clear of pharma controversies. The media Goliath, according to *Adbusters*, has "… such a stranglehold on the city that any reporter caught speaking out against them would have trouble finding work in Vancouver again." Take a look at the article entitled *The Death of Canadian Journalism* in the Sept-Oct 2007 issue of *Adbusters*. It will send shivers up your spine.

While the Ministry of Health's stacked panel raises suspicions, some would say its existence is further evidence of the expanding P-3 (Public-Private-Partnership) model of healthcare, which has already colonized the treatments of chronic diseases and private clinics here.

I don't think we can put all the blame on the media for missing the important stories. We in the electorate have to shoulder some of the responsibility. We can sit idly by as the government, with the media's support, shaves off more of our health care system and sells it to private industries like the pharmaceutical industry.

Me? I'm going to vote with my money and my mouth and support decent investigative journals so I can actually find out what's going on in this province.

Speaking of P-3s, my latest book is a P-3 of a different ilk. It's a "Pharmaceutical Poetry Primer," entitled the *ABCs of Disease Mongering* (EmDash, 2008), distributed by the Literary Press Group and now available in bookstores.

Alan Cassels is a pharmaceutical policy researcher at the University of Victoria and a frequent commentator on prescription drug issues.

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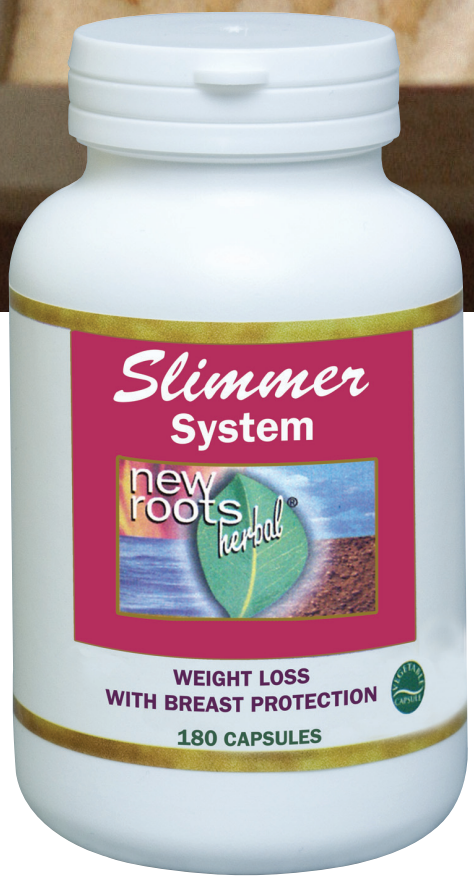

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Treat yourself

NUTRISPEAK Vesanto Melina MS, RD

Throughout my childhood, our family had a February tradition. During this grey, rainy month, my sisters and I were allowed to stay home from school for one day and do whatever we liked (within reason). This personal holiday was created by my mom, simply because February tends to be such a dreary month.

Mahara Brenna, an outstanding mediator and master rebirther in Vancouver, recently commented to me that, in this geographic region, we would have a tough time making it from November to March without the bright lights and celebrations that occur in December. She admonished, "Think Cozy. We're meant to dive deep during these dark months. The Spirit totem for the West is the bear. And so too, as West Coasters, we are meant to hibernate. Rest more, slide into comfy evenings of introspection and personal healing work. Light lots of candles, play inspirational music and cultivate the inner light that can seem more luminous in contrast to the darkness outside."

As winter drags on and spring is not yet emerging, we can also come up with treats for ourselves. One healthy pleasure is to come in from the outdoors on a chilly afternoon to enjoy the scrumptious aroma of potatoes baking in the oven. In fact, with savoury toppings such as the Naam restaurant's gravy along with some diced red pepper and a side of steamed broccoli, we can build a very pretty meal around the simple baked potato. Another favourite of mine is black bean soup simmering on the stove, with the aroma of onion, oregano and cumin wafting from the pot. Serve this with a sandwich of slices of fresh tomato and avocado, heaped on toasted, whole grain bread.

February's redeeming feature is, of course, Valentine's Day, and for many people, along with all the wonderful love, that includes chocolate. The recipe included here appears in both *Becoming Vegetarian* (by Melina and Davis, Wiley Canada) and *The Food Allergy Survival Guide* (by Stepaniak and Melina, Healthy Living Publications). As these squares don't require baking, they can be stirred together by the resident, young assistant chefs at your house. For a gluten-free version, use corn flakes or other gluten-free, flaked cereal.

Vesanto Melina is a dietitian and author of nutrition classics; she consults from her home office in Langley. www.nutrispeak.com, 604-882-6782.

Chocolate Mint Nut Bars

~ Makes 20 bars ~

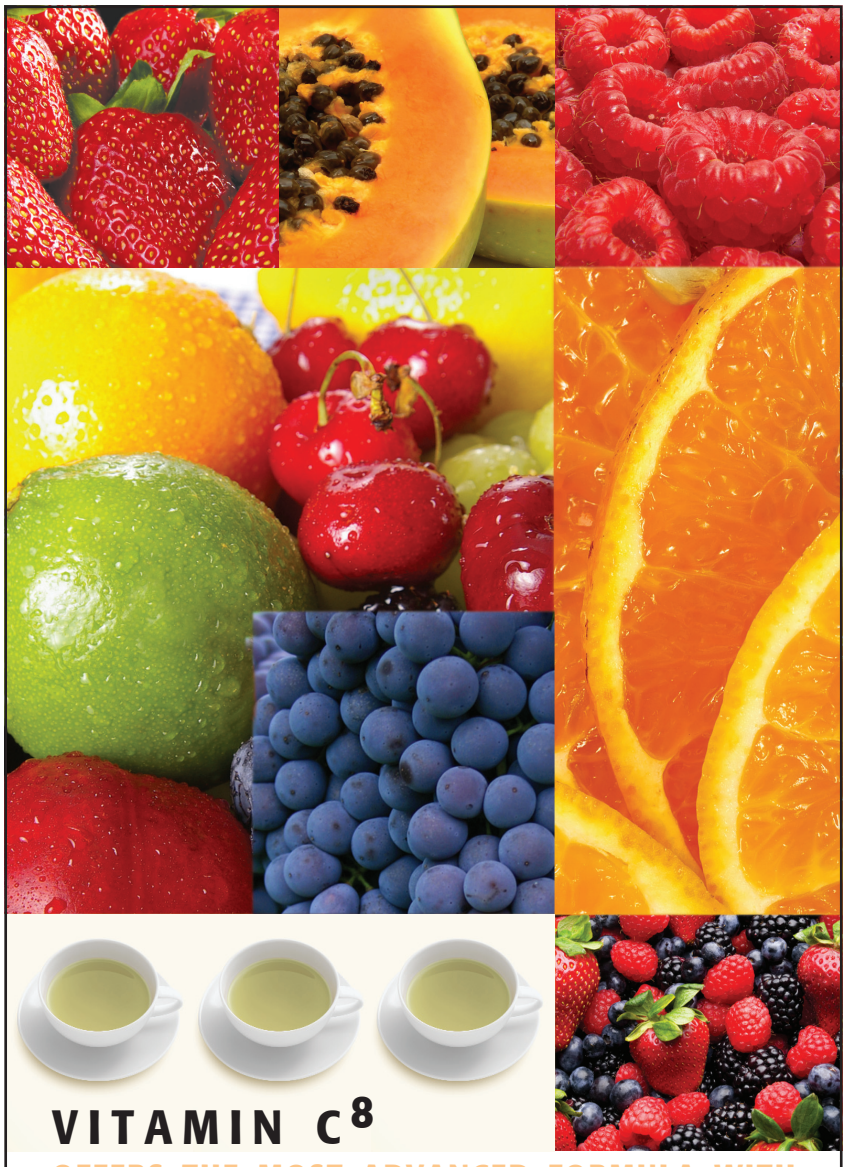
Love chocolate? Here's a treat that's bursting with nutrition. If you use almonds and almond butter, it also provides a source of calcium. For a zinc-rich treat, make it with cashews and cashew butter. For omega-3 fatty acids, try walnuts plus nut butter. For economy, try peanuts and peanut butter. Rice syrup is an excellent choice for this recipe because of its thickness; get it at health food stores. Maple syrup is delicious, although the squares are not so firm at warm temperatures. You may use 2.5 ounces of carob chips instead of the chocolate, and vanilla in place of mint.

- 125 ml (1/2 cup) nut butter
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) syrup: rice, barley, malt or maple
- 71 g (2.5 oz.) unsweetened baking chocolate
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) mint extract
- 500 ml (2 cups) flaked cereal such as Nature's Path millet rice cereal
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) chopped, unsalted nuts
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) oat bran or wheat germ

Heat nut butter and syrup in pan over medium-low heat until nut butter softens and mixes easily with syrup. (If you have a double boiler, use it to avoid possibility of scorching.) Lower heat to simmer; cook for about two minutes, stirring constantly. Stir in chocolate until melted. Remove from heat; stir in mint. Mix in cereal, nuts and bran. Press into a lightly oiled, 8-inch, square cake pan. Refrigerate until firm. Make 3 cuts in one direction, 4 in the other, to create 20 bars.

FREE TALKS

Catch Vesanto's free presentation on ***The Food Allergy Survival Guide*** at Park Royal's Whole Foods Market in West Vancouver, Friday, February 1, 6:30 pm, and a seminar on "Surviving and Thriving Despite Food Sensitivities" at the 16th Annual Wellness Show at Vancouver's Convention Centre, Sunday, February 3, 12:30 pm. Visit the Book Publishing Company's booth #618A to say hello to Vesanto and co-author Brenda Davis.



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PREVENTION & CURE

It's your move!

by Susan Kulas

yoga for a better world

We always have the powerful choice to determine which colours we project from our consciousness onto our impressions of the world. For example, do we project sadness or joy, anxiety or love, criticism or appreciation, anger or enthusiasm?

When I think of "moves," it is not only the movement of the physical body, but also the movement of the breath, the changing emotions and the unlimited variety of thoughts that stream through the mind. The beginning of a new day is a perfect opportunity to begin again, for it is in the small, sustainable refinements that we make the lasting changes.

What is your idea of a perfect day?

My perfect day would be full of joy and a deep peace naturally arising from the connection with friends, and a harmonious relationship with the earth. The key that moves the world towards becoming a better place is our relationship with each other. Have you ever tried reaching into someone's life to really feel what it must be like for them to be who they are and do what they do? Like the old adage, "Never judge a man until you have walked a mile in his moccasins," it can make an immediate difference to us to simply pause long enough to see and appreciate the person in front of us.

If we evoke how it feels to simply and sincerely say, "Thank you," or how it feels when someone sincerely thanks us, there is an instant experience of fullness. This attitude of appreciation has the effect of really filling the missing gaps in our life, if there are any. As we become full of admiration for people, we become full of joy. There's no need to give ourselves a hard time; we can let ourselves be completely positive and optimistic about ourselves and others.

The checklist of ingredients for a perfect day must surely include everything seeming to flow effortlessly – when we just "happen" to find ourselves in just the right place at just the right time, to meet just the right people who give us just the right information to help with our plans. We have all experienced the sense of rightness about these days, when we have the feeling that life really *is* on our side. Haven't we all wished that every day could be like that? It can! And we can achieve it on a constant basis as we come to know our chakras.

This knowledge is totally natural. It's a bit like choosing which radio channel to listen to. The frequency you opt for determines what you hear. Just as we can almost immediately recognize our favourite radio station from the content, tone, and location on the dial, we can also, through experience, come to recognize which chakra is expressing itself. And we can do this by paying attention to the signs and symptoms of our physical body language, our behaviour and mood states, the nature of our thoughts and our sense of feeling connected or isolated. Once we understand how we perceive our world, we can learn to skilfully retune ourselves, when necessary.

Creating your reality

We perceive our world through our five senses. Within the Dru yoga tradition, we recognize that we always have the powerful choice to determine which colours we project from our consciousness onto our impressions of the world. For example, do we project sadness or joy, anxiety or love, criticism or appreciation, anger or enthusiasm? To make the choice, it is essential that we have a method or technique to lift ourselves up, similar to the invitation in the Bhagavad Gita: "Lift yourself up by the power of your Self." As we lift ourselves up, just like with climbing a mountain, the view changes so we see things differently.

Conscious movements, breath, affirmation, relaxation and meditation are all effective methods for changing the view and cultivating receptivity. Within Dru yoga, one of the great tools we harness in this way is the power of the heart chakra as the master transformer. Through specific movements, the "energetic" heart is strengthened. Over time, the complexity of the mind is governed by the refined qualities of kindness, compassion and reverence, generated within the heart. Since the heart and mind maintain a continuous two-way dialogue, with each influencing how the other functions, we can simply use our heart to change our mind. This has a deeply soothing effect, resulting in lasting feelings of well-being – our natural state.

The way this manifests in life is a constant source of inspiration for me. All over the world, I hear many personal stories of profound gratitude from people whose lives are empowered through greater confidence, love and the courage to achieve their goals and pursue their heart's dreams.

The Dru techniques engage every aspect of our beings – physical, energetic, emotional, intellectual and spiritual – which enables us to be more and more in the flow of life. Through practice, we are able to direct our energy at will and so redirect and reorganize our lives in every moment. In other words, we are able to respond to life in the way we choose.

Moves for the world a better place

1. Deepen your appreciation of yourself and others. (Use the Heart Kriya below.)
2. Develop greater receptivity though conscious movement, breath, relaxation and affirmation.
3. Utilize techniques that lift us above the smog of thoughts and feelings, helping us to see a wider perspective.

Susan Kulas is a senior international Dru Yoga teacher, trainer and workshop facilitator. Dru Yoga Teacher Training and Personal Development Course starts April 25. Info & registration: canada@druworldwide.com, 604-263-4432 or 604-936-3255, www.druworldwide.com/canada See March Datebook listings for Vancouver classes and workshops.

Heart Kriya

1. Choose a comfortable meditation posture. Become aware of your breath. Gradually extend the out-breath until it is twice as long as the in-breath.
2. As you breathe in, mentally follow your breath down as far as your heart. As you breathe out, visualize light (or feel a sense of lightness) flowing from your heart to every part of your body. With each breath, let this light become brighter and brighter. You may feel yourself becoming lighter and lighter.
3. After a while, you will begin to feel a spaciousness in your heart centre. Breathe normally as you sink into a still point in the centre of your being. Enter more deeply into it with each breath.
4. Come out of the meditation, keeping your self anchored to the point of inner stillness.

Reprinted from Dru Yoga: Stillness in Motion *by Chris Barrington, Anita Goswami and Annie Jones.*

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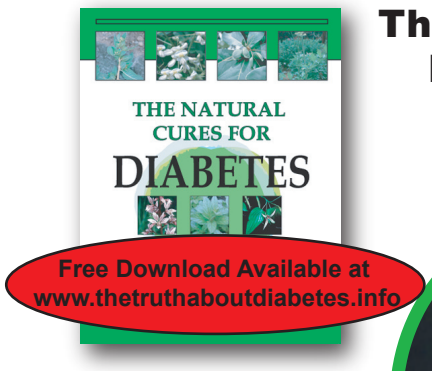

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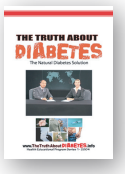

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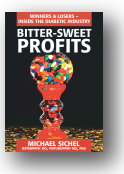

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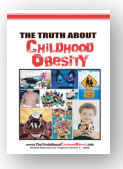

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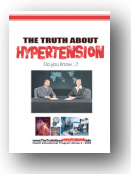

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SEX the enduring drive

by Sandra Pettman

Nursing home staff have become much more willing to accommodate sexual activity between residents... a care facility where one lives is now considered a person's home, rather than an institution, and the residents are viewed as people, rather than patients.

One of my first social work jobs was in a large Vancouver nursing home, where the last thing I expected to hear about was sex. When I did hear about it – repeatedly – I found myself ill equipped to deal with it. Like many young people, my idea of normal sexual behaviour in the elderly was no such behaviour at all. It's been several years since I left that job, but the experiences I had dealing with sexual issues in that facility continue to challenge the ways I think about seniors, sexuality and health.

In talking to colleagues, I've discovered that I am not alone in my discovery that sexual activity between residents in nursing homes is both plentiful and provocative. In fact, the Geriatric Psychiatric Education Program (GPEP), which provides education and support to all government-funded homes in Vancouver, receives requests for help in handling issues about residents' sexual activity every few months and has been offering classes on the topic for years. What I still struggle to imagine is what it is really like for a nursing home resident to try and meet this basic human need for intimacy in such a controlled, communal setting. In extended care nursing homes, for example, four people share one room, with only a curtain to divide the beds.

*Patrick moved into the home where I worked when his physical ailments made it impossible for him to cook, clean, shop or even bathe independently. He was a retired musician and brought boxes of records, tapes and CDs into his small room. I thought it was an enormous collection, but he told me it was only a fraction of the musical library he'd had in his house. Patrick's daughter Maxine visited regularly and when Maxine's husband's mother Hazel also needed care due to progressive memory loss, Maxine and her husband John arranged to have Hazel move in as well.

With Maxine and John making joint visits to their widowed parents, the arrangement worked well for the family. Patrick showed Hazel around the home and they got to know each other. Hazel was physically strong and helped Patrick retrieve books from higher shelves. The two spent increasing amounts of time in each other's single rooms and Hazel's lifelong depression lifted completely.

One day a nurse came to my office and advised that she'd walked in on Patrick and Hazel having sex. I likely responded with a blank look, although I don't remember for sure. I was having enough trouble managing the tasks I knew I was answerable for – admissions, care conferences, resident council meetings – and I had no idea what the appropriate response to her announcement might be. In hopes of seeming professional and of buying myself some time, I asked for more details.

"What do you mean exactly they were having sex?"

"Well, they were sitting on the bed and both of their pants were pulled down. He had his hand …"

"OK, OK, I see.

Clearly we were talking about more than platonic handholding. I told the nurse I would deal with it and went straight to the Director of Care's office, who instructed me to call Hazel's son and inform him of his mother's intimate relationship with his father-in-law and ask him if he wanted us to allow the relationship to continue. In an extremely awkward telephone conversation, full of stammering pauses, I gave John the same information the nurse had given me, assuring him that, "Yes, your mother appeared to be enjoying herself." John said he would get back to me. After discussing the matter with his wife, he asked that the relationship be allowed to continue and that Hazel and Patrick's privacy be respected as much as possible. At the facility, residents could lock their doors, but staff had master keys and would usually give only a cursory knock before entering.

Looking back now, I realize that Patrick and Hazel were lucky on several counts. Many nursing home residents in their situation would have had their relationship curtailed. The couple's main advantage was that they were known to each other's families and connected through marriage. When a resident has dementia, as Hazel did, a family member is often asked to decide what the appropriate sexual behaviour should be for that resident. Had John been more protective regarding his mother's sexuality, or unsure about Patrick's motives or background, he could have asked us to intervene, and we would have.

Hazel and Patrick were also both widowed. A colleague told me about an instance where two nursing home residents, both with dementia, began a sexual romance. The man was still married and his wife and family visited the

home. Partly because the relationship seemed so beneficial to both residents, staff made the decision not to inform the man's wife.

More common, however, are situations where staff, including social workers, are not comfortable with sexual intimacy between residents. A lot depends on our individual beliefs. Are same sex relationships natural? Is unmarried sex OK? Do older people still have sexual needs? Are there circumstances where marital infidelity may be excused? Is masturbation a healthy behaviour? Residents are dependent on staff; Patrick couldn't go to the toilet without someone helping him. If we choose to, as nurses, social workers and care aides, we are in a position to impose our personal beliefs upon the residents we care for.

Another colleague told me about a couple in a nursing home who'd been intimate as partners for years. Eventually, the woman had to be moved to a different floor because of her worsening dementia. Their consensual sexual relationship continued, but staff became concerned about it being abusive, to the point that a meeting was called and mental health professionals consulted. The result was that no reason for alarm could be found and the mental health team was somewhat confused by the staff's adamant wish that "something be done." My colleague speculates whether the man's history of struggling with alcohol addiction coloured staff's perception of him; he'd been on the verge of eviction several times. But he'd been a faithful and attentive companion to his mate and neither of them had any other family or friends.

Obviously, intervention by staff is warranted in some cases, but in its education session, the GPEP makes a distinction between "managing" residents' sexual behaviour – trying to change it for a purpose, making and keeping residents compliant – and "responding" to it with skill, compassion and care. In other words, who is the sex really a problem for – the staff or the residents?

"To be human is to be sexual," the GPEP session also stresses, yet a person's sexuality is as individual as the person themselves. One home requested the GPEP's help with a female resident who continually grabbed men in a sexually suggestive manner when they walked by her room. It turned out the woman had run a brothel when she was younger, and she was also a very sensual person who'd had many partners throughout her life. In the context of who she had been in her earlier life, the woman's advances were normal rather than deviant. Knowing this helped staff be more understanding towards her and comfortable with her behaviour.

Sometimes, it's even the case that behaviour is deemed sexually inappropriate when it isn't sexual at all. A woman with a large personality to go with her large physical stature moved into a home. She quickly focused her attention on another female resident, often touching her and adjusting her clothing. Staff assumed the woman was a lesbian making amorous advances. A little investigation into her history revealed that she was the eldest of six siblings whose mother had died, leaving her as the surrogate parent. She'd been a caregiver all her life and much of her identity was tied to her love of helping others.

The GPEP and my colleagues tell me that, in recent years, nursing home staff have become much more willing to accommodate sexual activity between residents. This is due partly to a significant shift in attitude; a care facility where one lives is now considered a person's home, rather than an institution, and the residents are viewed as people, rather than patients. Each generation becomes increasingly more open about sex and to the possibility of sexuality at all stages of one's life. But such shifts happen slowly and many of my fellow social workers are calling for education around sexual behaviour in nursing homes to be mandatory for anyone working in the field. Educate, educate, educate, that's the key to change, they tell me.

Canadians are living longer and the possibility that you or I will end up having age-related health issues and will need to be in a residential care facility cannot be overlooked. What are your sexual needs now? Can you see them being met in a small room with a single hospital bed where a multitude of people may walk in at any time, unannounced, and where people with different religious and political beliefs, cultural backgrounds and education levels have the potential power to regulate your behaviour?

Let's hope that we are as lucky as Patrick and Hazel in our later years, still able to experience the joy of intimacy even if we do live in a nursing home.

**All names and Patrick's profession have been changed for confidentiality. Sandra Pettman lives in Vancouver where she works as a social worker and a writer. Her poetry has been published in* A Room of One's Own *and* Contemporary Verse 2.

As nurses, social workers and care aides, we are in a position to impose our personal beliefs upon the residents we care for...

Who is the sex really a problem for – the staff or the residents?

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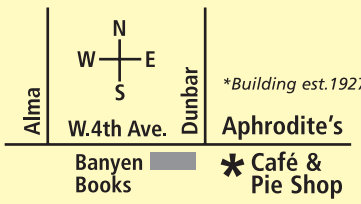

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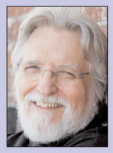

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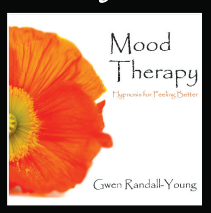

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Love and spirit

THE POWER OF NOW *Eckhart Tolle*

Whenever your relationship is not working, whenever it brings out the "madness" in you and in your partner, be glad. What was unconscious is being brought up to the light. It is an opportunity for salvation. Every moment, hold the knowing of that moment, particularly of your inner state. If there is anger, know there is anger. If there is jealousy, defensiveness, the urge to argue, the need to be right… or emotional pain of any kind, whatever it is, know the reality of that moment and hold the knowing. The relationship then becomes your *sadhana*, your spiritual practice. If you observe unconscious behaviour in your partner, hold it in the loving embrace of your knowing so you won't react.

Unconsciousness and knowing cannot coexist for long, even if the knowing is only in the other person and not in the one who is acting out the unconsciousness. If you react at all to your partner's unconsciousness, you become unconscious yourself. But if you then remember to know your reaction, nothing is lost.

Humanity is under great pressure to evolve because it is our only chance of survival as a race. This will affect every aspect of your life and, in particular, your close relationships. Never before have relationships been as problematic and conflict-ridden as they are now. As you may have noticed, they are not here to make you happy or fulfilled. If you continue to pursue the goal of salvation through a relationship, you will be disillusioned again and again.

But if you accept that the relationship is here to make you conscious instead of happy, the relationship will offer you salvation and you will be aligning yourself with the higher consciousness that wants to be born into this world. For those who hold on to the old patterns, there will be increasing pain, violence, confusion and madness.

Sanity – consciousness – can only come into this world through you. You do not need to wait for the world to become sane or for somebody else to become conscious before you can be enlightened. You may wait forever. Do not accuse each other of being unconscious. The moment you start to argue, you have identified with a mental position and are now defending not only that position but also your sense of self. The ego is in charge. You have become unconscious.

When your partner behaves unconsciously, relinquish all judgment. To relinquish judgment does not mean that you do not recognize dysfunction and unconsciousness when you see it. It means "being the knowing" rather than "being the reaction" and the judge. Instead of fighting the darkness, you bring in the light. Being the knowing creates a clear space of loving presence that allows all things and all people to be as they are. No greater catalyst for transformation exists. If you practise this, your partner cannot stay with you and remain unconscious. If you both agree that the relationship will be your spiritual practice, so much the better. You can then express your thoughts and feelings to each other as soon as they occur, or as soon as a reaction comes up, so that you do not create a time gap in which an unexpressed or unacknowledged emotion or grievance can fester and grow.

Relationships are not here to make you happy or fulfilled. If you continue to pursue the goal of salvation through a relationship, you will be disillusioned again and again.

Learn to give expression to what you feel without blaming. Learn to listen to your partner in an open, non-defensive way. Give your partner space for expressing himself or herself. Be present. Giving space to others and yourself is vital. Love cannot flourish without it.

When you have removed the two factors that are destructive to relationships – when the pain-body has been transmuted and you are no longer identified with mind and mental positions – and if your partner has done the same, you will experience the bliss of the flowering of relationship. Instead of mirroring to each other pain and unconsciousness… you will reflect back to each other the love that you feel deep within, the love that comes with the realization of your oneness with all that is. This is the love that has no opposite.

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Releasing with joy and ease

UNIVERSE WITHIN *Gwen Randall-Young*

SPIRITUALITY

Bless a thing and it will bless you. Curse it and it will curse you...
– Emmet Fox

Sometimes life seems like a struggle. We may have big, ongoing issues to deal with or it may just be one of those days when everything seems to go wrong. The natural tendency is to brace ourselves, react or go into contraction. It is almost as though we are trying to resist or oppose whatever is happening.

When we respond this way, our muscles get tight, our breathing becomes shallower, stress chemicals are released in the body, our blood pressure may go up and we may even experience problems with digestion and sleep. We tell ourselves life should not be like this; these things should not be happening to us. We just want our lives to go smoothly. Of course, this is our ego talking from its own limited perspective.

We are involved in a much larger life script than ego could ever imagine. There are many players in the script; it is most certainly not all about us. If we were acting in a play, even if the person we were playing was going through intense difficulties, we would not take it personally; we would simply play out the part. We might even be quite relaxed about it, knowing that the character is struggling, but that we do not have to join in that struggle.

In life, it is ego that reacts to all that transpires. If we are connected with our souls, we can observe what is being played out and how ego is reacting. Like a reassuring parent, we can tell ourselves that this is not the end of the world and we will get through it.

My massage therapist talks about releasing difficulties with joy and with ease. At first, it seems a little strange to think of joy co-existing with something that is painful or difficult. However, it is ego that holds on and perceives things as terrible, unfair or aggravating. There can certainly be joy and ease in letting all of this negativity go.

In fact, joy and ease cannot truly co-exist with struggle and pain, so if we move into a place where we allow ourselves to feel those positive qualities, the struggle does seem to evaporate. I imagine a young child complaining that a sibling is causing distress. The mother responds by suggesting the child go to a different room and do something fun. If the child does this, his life experience in that moment immediately changes.

Of course, in adult life, it is not always quite that simple, although it often is. Issues we have with other people can often simply be let go. With everyday things like a kid's homework, car breakdowns and tight finances, we need simply remind ourselves that they are part of the territory, the norm. Life is not always a breeze and at those times we just hunker down and do what needs to be done in the best spirit we can muster.

Then there are the real challenges: serious illness or the death of a loved one. There is no question that these will hit us harder and emotions will run high. We will go through all the stages associated with these traumas: anger, denial, sorrow, grief, resentment and pain. We cannot release these emotions so easily, nor should we. Experiencing them is part of the healing and coming to terms with what is.

Ultimately, though, we can come to a place where we see it all as part of this experience that is life. There are beginnings and endings, joys and sorrows, holding on and letting go. Even in these more serious life circumstances, we can eventually release all our burdens with joy and ease.

We do this by holding others and ourselves in a place of love, with compassion for all that comprises our human experience. It is, after all, and in spite of it all, a sacred journey.

Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist in private practice and author of Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution. *For articles and information about her books and "Deep Powerful Change" personal growth/hypnosis CDs, visit www.gwen.ca*

Joy and ease cannot truly co-exist with struggle and pain, so if we move into a place where we allow ourselves to feel those positive qualities, the struggle does seem to evaporate.

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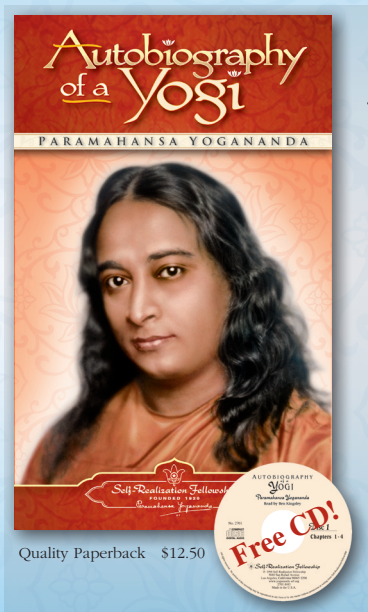

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Secret war cont. from p. 30

Providing RADARSAT data: Eagle Vision, a US Air Force mobile ground station, which controls Canada's RADARSAT-1 satellite and downlinks its data, was used from the start of the Iraq War.
Diplomatic support: Former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien supported the "right" of the US to invade Iraq, although Kofi Annan said it was an illegal occupation. Chrétien criticized Canadian citizens who questioned the war, saying they provided comfort to Saddam Hussein.
Training Iraqi police: Canada has spent millions sending RCMP officers to Jordan to train tens of thousands of cadets for Iraq's paramilitary police force.
Training Iraqi troops: High-level Canadian military personnel joined the "NATO Training Mission in Iraq" to "train the trainers" of Iraqi Security Forces who are on the leading edge of the US occupation. A Canadian colonel, under NATO command, was chief of staff at the Baghdad-based training mission. Canada was the leading donor to this centre, providing an initial $810 thousand.
Funding Iraq's interior ministry: Canada provides advisors and financial support to this ministry, which has been caught running torture centres. Thousands of its officers have been withdrawn for corruption, and it has been accused of working with death squads that executed a thousand people per month in Baghdad alone in the summer of 2006.
Military exports: At least 100 Canadian companies sold parts and/or services for major weapons systems used in the Iraq War. Quebec's SNC-TEC sold millions of bullets to the US military forces occupying Iraq. General Dynamics Canada, in London Ontario, sold hundreds of armoured vehicles to the US and Australia. Between October 2003 and November 2005, these troop transport vehicles logged over six million miles in Iraq.

Canadians are forced to invest their pension money in hundreds of military industries, including most of the world's top 20 weapons producers, which are the leading prime contractors for virtually all the major weapons systems used in Iraq.

Canada Pension Plan investments: Canadians are forced to invest their pension money in hundreds of military industries, including most of the world's top 20 weapons producers, which are the leading prime contractors for virtually all the major weapons systems used in Iraq.

So the next time a proud fellow citizen tells you that Canada *didn't* join the Iraq War, remind them of Mark Twain's famous quip: "It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so."

For more information on the myth of Canada's role as a global peacemaker, read Press for Conversion, www.coat.ncf.ca, or write to COAT, 541 McLeod St., Ottawa, ON, K1R 5R2. Richard Sanders is the coordinator for the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade.

My beef with global warming

EARTHFUTURE *Guy Dauncey*

I am not a meat eater. I have been vegetarian all my adult life, simply because I don't want to contribute to the suffering and killing of animals that are raised for meat.

I still consume milk and cheese so I have to acknowledge that I'm still a cause of the cruelty associated with the dairy industry, where the cows' male calves are taken away from them at birth and raised in tight crates, before being killed for veal (see www.noveal.org).

The matter that concerns me here is the impact of animal farming on global warming. This has been the quiet taboo that most climate scientists and activists don't want to talk about. One prominent scientist publicly scolded me for even raising the topic. He said it was hard enough getting people to cut back on driving, let alone asking them to stop eating meat.

During 2007, awareness that the livestock industry was part of the problem took a leap forward with the release of the UN report *Livestock's Long Shadow*, which teases apart the many ways in which cattle, sheep and pigs are a cause of global warming.

It starts with the production of nitrogen fertilizers for use on livestock feed crops. This uses five percent of the world's natural gas, producing 40 million tonnes of CO_2 a year. Next, there's the use of fossil fuels for heat, machinery, irrigation, drying, etc, at 90 million tonnes.

A third factor is the burning of forests to grow feed for livestock, especially in Latin America. This is a big component, releasing 2.4 billion tonnes of CO_2 a year. Cattle that graze on open pastures are not off the hook; the desertification that grazing causes produces 100 million tonnes.

Then there is the reality that cows have four stomachs. Without oxygen, their food ferments and they burp methane; that traps 25 times more heat than CO_2 over 100 years (up to 100 times as much over 12 years, the natural life of methane). Buffaloes, sheep, goats and camels also burp methane. Pig and cow manure releases another 200 million tonnes. Measured as CO_2 equivalent (CO_2e), it comes to 2.2 billion tonnes.

Finally, we come back to nitrogen. When nitrogen fertilizer is applied to the land wastefully, it is not all absorbed by the soil, but escapes as nitrous oxide (N_2O), a greenhouse gas that traps 298 times more heat than CO_2 and persists in the atmosphere for up to 150 years. It is also released by animal manure. All told, livestock's N_2O emissions produce a further 2.2 billion tonnes of CO_2.

When you total it up, it comes to 7.1 billion tonnes, or 18 percent of the 40 billion tonnes of CO_2e that humans produce each year – more than all the world's transport.

I am rewriting my book on solutions to global warming and when I crunched the numbers I got the astonishing result that eating beef adds 4.6 tonnes to an individual's yearly emissions of CO_2e – more than a year's driving in an average car. A kilogram of beef produces 90 kg of CO_2e. If true, a ¼ pound single hamburger is responsible for 9 kg of emissions – the same as driving 20 to 25 miles.

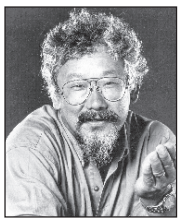
I should state that my results are still in the interim stages. The Greenpeace report *Cool Farming* suggests 13 kg of CO_2 per kg of beef, 17 kg per kg of lamb. A 2007 Japanese study suggested 36.4 kg of CO_2 from a kg of beef. For determined meat-eaters, a 2003 Swedish study concluded that organic beef, raised on grass, produces 40 percent less CO_2e. It is also far healthier since it contains good Omega 3 fatty acids, instead of the harmful Omega 6.

Whatever the final numbers, the conclusion is clear. Cutting right back on our consumption of meat and dairy must be an essential part of any strategy to tackle global warming.

But don't mourn – I can assure you that good veggie food tastes delicious and is far better for your health. You'll even live longer. Not a bad trade-off!

I am rewriting my book on solutions to global warming and when I crunched the numbers I got the astonishing result that eating beef adds 4.6 tonnes to an individual's yearly emissions of CO_2e – more than a year's driving in an average car.

Guy Dauncey is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (www.bcsea.org) and author of Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change. *See www.earthfuture.com*



Green is in

ENVIRONMENT

SCIENCE MATTERS *David Suzuki with Faisal Moola*

Welcome to 2008. If you had told me at the beginning of last year that 2007 would be the breakout year for the environment, I probably wouldn't have believed you. Yes, 2006 had *An Inconvenient Truth*, but 2007 saw the environment become a true media darling.

As great as this has been, we mustn't forget that news is a fickle beast and, by definition, "new" doesn't last very long. That means we need to keep the interest moving forward or we could lose the momentum we've built up.

We've come a pretty long way in two years. In 2006, people started paying attention to the environment again. It was like society woke up from a collective, environmental slumber, looked around with bleary eyes, blinked and asked, "What's going on?" And people started to look for answers.

In 2007, the media got on board. Environmental stories made front-page news all year long. Books about the environment became best-sellers. Magazines from home design to celebrity gossip suddenly had environment pages or "green" tips. Eco-this and enviro-that became commonplace. My local newspaper, the *Vancouver Sun*, actually invited me to be guest editor and has seen a newfound interest in environmental stories.

But for those of us old enough to remember back a couple decades, this might seem like déjà vu. In the late 80s and early 90s, the environment was also a top public concern. Governments poured money into environment ministries. Corporations developed environmental stewardship platforms. Municipalities across the country rolled out blue-box recycling programs.

And the people cheered. Problem solved! Now they could go back to worrying about more manageable individual priorities like paying bills, going to work and providing for their families. Of course, we all know now that the problem wasn't solved by a long shot. But we lost a decade of potential progress because people slipped into complacency. And who can blame them? No one wants to deal with something as big and complicated as our global environment.

The thing is we don't have a choice anymore. Leading scientists have been telling us for decades that we are on a very dangerous path. The good news is that it is not too late to change the route we are on. There are alternative ways to live that are in balance with Earth's life support systems. But getting on a new path requires real change.

So what does "real change" mean? For governments, giving money to an environment ministry only to have its mandate trounced by the ministry of natural resources, energy or finance won't cut it. For corporations, token efforts like a "green" building design or energy efficient lighting won't cut it if your bottom line is still profits at the expense of the environment. For individuals, using reusable bags instead of plastic, or carrying a re-usable coffee cup will do little if you're still driving to work every day. If it sounds like a challenge, that's because it is. Real solutions are never easy and there will be lots of arguments. We will also make mistakes. But the only real failure will be if we don't try at all. We've only got one Earth, so we can't very well just wait and see what happens if we continue with business as usual. That path may look easy now, but in the near future it will make things very, very hard.

We've come a pretty long way in two years... It was like society woke up from a collective, environmental slumber.

So what does this all mean? It means it's time to dig deeper.

We already have the public's attention, but now we need to get serious about solutions. We know how hard it is to be environmentally responsible. Many of our daily decisions are not good for the environment because they are easier and often cheaper to make. Still, challenge yourself, challenge your neighbours and challenge your friends and co-workers to make Canada a global warming problem-solver, not a problem-maker.

Large-scale changes also require corporate and government leadership. But here, too, individual action can have great power. Politicians and business leaders know the public is concerned, but they are slow to respond unless really pushed. If you really want to make a big difference in 2008, push them. Push them hard. Change is underway. Real change is happening. Let our leaders know there's nothing that can stop it.

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Shock and Owe

story and photos
by Geoff Olson

RAV-ravaged Cambie merchants fight back

A "shock and owe" campaign on Cambie. That's what retailer Susan Heyes calls the rapid transit project in her neighbourhood, which began in August of 2005. She also calls it "Nightmare on Cambie Street," a "… years-in-the making production, shot in glorious P3D, featuring 24-hour surround sound, a totally improvised screenplay, groundbreaking non-stop action and explosive performances by some of the industry's biggest players, with the largest budget ever recorded."

Heyes sits in her Quebec street workspace, surrounded by controlled chaos: fabric rolls, dress designs, stacks of CDs and a corkboard festooned with newspaper clippings. Her daughter's colourful drawings and paintings decorate the walls. Heyes, the 50-year-old owner and operator of Hazel and Co., a Cambie retail outlet for maternity wear and women's clothing, has found her free time has all but evaporated, ever since a massive public works program hit her retail area and livelihood.

The $2-billion-and-counting Canada Line project – formerly known as the Richmond-Airport-Vancouver Line (RAV Line) – is a rapid transit system under construction to connect the city with Richmond and the Vancouver International Airport. The 19-kilometre line is the biggest transportation infrastructure project in BC's history.

P3 contractor SNC-Lavalin Inc. is building the line and, once complete, will operate it for 35 years. And although the costs are not factored into the 2010 Vancouver Olympic budget, the project is part and parcel of the pre-Games infrastructure blitz now hitting the Lower Mainland.

Throughout the two-year construction, many merchants along the Canada Line have struggled to survive, faced with drastically reduced sales, the inevitable result of traffic diverted from the area. A massive canyon down the middle of Cambie has created what looks like a post-nuclear film set in the retail area, from 12th to King Edward Avenue. Businesses all the way to Marine Drive have felt the retail chill.

Heyes believes she and her fellow merchants were sold a bill of goods on the RAV Line. "They assured the community they would bore a tunnel under the street, and the construction would be two to three months in front of any given business. It's been over two years."

The maternity clothing retailer is now leading the litigation charge against the City of Vancouver, the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, RAV project management, Intransit BC and Translink. In November of last year, the project's attorneys failed to quash her case for financial compensation.

"My sales dropped instantly 30 percent in November 2005," Heyes recalls in her Quebec street workspace. "I was so scared. At the time, I had been doing this for 22 years, and now I'm in jeopardy of having everything being dragged down because of this."

Heyes says she's lost $500,000 in business since the project began and has had to mortgage her home twice in two years. She cannot afford to lose this fight, being on the line for the legal costs if her court case fails.

She's not alone in her battle. The Cambie Village Business Association, which has pretty much ignored the concerns of Heyes and others throughout this debacle, will launch a group action lawsuit this month, claiming property owners and businesses have suffered losses from the transit project.

Leonard Schein, a board member of the Cambie Village Business Association, says about 60 businesses along the street have either closed or are on the brink of collapse. Some of those storefronts have turned over three times, Heyes notes. "A new business comes in - they fail, and then someone else comes in."

Linda Liu, owner of Cambie Street's Aurora Gallery, told *Common Ground*, "[The] construction has almost taken everything from us, not only personal savings, RSSP investment… but also happiness, healthiness... We have been cheated by Canada Line for two years, and we have been ignored by government for two years." Her disgust and dismay are echoed by other merchants along the line, such as Dale Dubberly, owner of Thai Away Home restaurant, who says he is "personally appalled and flabbergasted that the government, whose job it is to act in the best interest of small businesses as well as the community at large, would be my biggest financial challenge."

Heyes and other merchants are outraged that the Canada Line project through Cambie Village ended up as an open-air, cut-and-cover operation, when everyone expected a less invasive, underground tunnel-boring project. It was "no surprise" that it was proposed as the latter, Heyes says, but it was a huge surprise to everyone else when it turned into something much more disruptive.

"A cut-and-cover through the Cambie Village would never have been publicly approved. It was absolutely clear it was a bored tunnel... so that's what we based our business decisions on; that's why I signed a five-year lease, because I was told it was going to be bored, and the road surface in front of us wasn't going to be torn up. The council briefing notes absolutely outlined how destructive that method of construction would be in such a narrow and residential retail corridor. And for that reason, cut-and-cover was not considered for the Cambie Village."

Heyes argues that technical briefing documents, provided to City Council as the basis for its decision to approve the project, drafted in early spring 2003, prove her case. "They've been taken off the City website for obvious reasons." The following text appears on page 8 of Appendix B. RAV Proposal – Cambie Corridor Land Use and Compatibility City of Vancouver: "All of the RAV options propose a bored tunnel under Cambie Street between 8th Avenue and King Edward, and in some options further south, due to the traffic and land use difficulties associated with other alignment types."

Last fall, the Vancouver Board of Trade joined the Canada Line to promote "Lunch on the Line," a public relations campaign to encourage the city's business community to dine at restaurants along the cash-strapped street. "It's much more than lunch that we have on the line," Heyes notes. For her and her fellow merchants, condescending PR schemes and mottos like "Cambie is open and waiting for you," are just semantic ribbons on an empty package.

Yet there have been some positive responses to the merchants' troubles. Vancouver Board of Trade chair Henry Lee recently suggested that three cents a trip on the new line could cover merchants' compensation for the Canada Line disruption.

It's not as if Heyes' request for compensation is unusual, or even unprecedented. A similar situation prevailed in 1987, after construction of the Expo SkyTrain line caused disruption in Vancouver neighbourhoods. Property owners considered taking legal action, but were saved the bother when the City of Vancouver launched its own action against the province, reasoning that homeowners should have to go to court to force the government to provide compensation. The mayor at the time: Gordon Campbell.

Last November, Heyes upped her visibility in the Cambie campaign with some impromptu media monkey-wrenching. She heard an announcement on her car radio for a Canada Line ribbon-cutting ceremony at Cambie and 39th. She called the station, and learned the event was taking place in 15 minutes. Luckily, Heyes was nearby and she had poster board and a sharpie in the back of her car. She drove up to the event, scribbled away in her car, and rolled up her protest signs under her raincoat.

As RAV CEO Jane Bird announced the reopening of a section of Cambie, Heyes unveiled her sign, which read "Compensation Now! Too Little, Too Late" and "Our rights are being paved over." The TV cameras swung over to Heyes, and she made the national news. "I had my own little press conference afterwards,"

she says, with a note of pride.

For Heyes, ironies and absurdities abound on Vancouver's transit mega project. She recently discovered Canada is a world leader in the building of tunnel-boring machines. Toronto-based Lovat Inc. manufactures massive, electronically controlled cylinders with rotating steel and carbide teeth. These monsters dig passageways for subways, sewers and cables, and they are shipped to worksites as far as Russia, Turkey and China. According to the *Globe and Mail*, one of Lovat's tunnelling machines is now operating just a short distance from Vancouver, but not in Canada.

"They sent a machine to Seattle," Heyes says with laughter, bitterly amused that one of Canada's premier technologies is being used south of the border, but not along Cambie.

In fact, construction of a light rail line is underway on a 14-mile route from downtown Seattle to Tukwila, with completion scheduled for mid-2009. Unlike Vancouver, Seattle has made efforts to soften the blow of disrupted traffic to local businesses, with plenty of consultation and recommendations back and forth with local property owners and small business operators, including relocation costs for affected businesses. According to the *Beacon Hill News*, $7.5 million in mitigation funds were set aside to aid local businesses through loans. The initiative is succeeding.

Heyes is outraged that American small business owners were accorded more representative democracy than their Canadian counterparts. "This is the part that I find really unconscionable. They know how destructive this project would be; they didn't take any preventative measures for the businesses that were previously well established... they basically just let these poor families die, just let their businesses wither away."

The Canada Line will obviously be an enduring piece of infrastructure for Vancouver, for years beyond 2010. Yet many retailers in the path of our Olympic infrastructure developments, along with the residents of the Downtown East Side and people living near Eagleridge Bluffs, suspect the big-money, redevelopment tail is wagging the 2010 dog.

Host city status certainly frees up local governments and developers for enormous capital construction schemes, with ever-expanding budgets. This can include the gentrification of entire neighbourhoods, with the inevitable displacement of long-term residents. The privatization of profit is followed by the socialization of debt. In the long run, everyone pays, as was the case with the Montreal Olympics in '72, when the city was left with a billion dollar bill that it only recently paid off.

For Heyes, it all sounds like a variation of "disaster capitalism," as theorized by journalist Naomi Klein in her book *The Shock Doctrine*. Disaster capitalism isn't limited to Anglo-American nations. Red China, in its WTO-endorsed, corporate-friendly incarnation, is also getting into the spirit. The Olympic spirit, that is. The *Vancouver Sun* recently summed up the preparations on the other side of the world for the 2008 Games with the headline: "The New Beijing: Entire city blocks are bulldozed, yet few of the estimated 1.5 million people displaced appear to be complaining."

If my daughter were being bullied, I'd want to see justice done. I would want to bring the parties together and mediate. It isn't a matter of protesting just to be radical; this particular issue has an easy fix: compensation. The fact that they've done nothing is really unconscionable. - *Susan Heyes*

According to the Geneva-based Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, at least 1.25 million people have been displaced since April 2007. Unknown numbers of people have been evicted forcibly, though many people are reportedly being given financial compensation and a chance at a new, modern apartment further on Beijing's outskirts. The *Vancouver Sun* report also notes that Chinese citizens lack property rights, and judges are often corrupted by party officials and developers. "There have been complaints of violent evictions by thugs or construction crews injuring or even killing occupants during a demolition."

Red China's approach to non-democratic development seems to whet the appetite of our public leaders. Consider the words of BC's transport minister Kevin Falcon. According to *Public Eye Online*, in May of 2006, the Surrey-Cloverdale MLA gave a speech to the Lower Mainland Municipal Association's annual general meeting, where he spoke about a bridge built to connect Mainland China to a new, island-based, deep-water port.

In his speech, Falcon stated, "No one there ever questions the need to build infrastructure like this. Now, granted, China has a bit of a different governance structure. But, in many ways, it is the ideal governance structure." The room reportedly broke into laughter at Falcon's remark. The transport minister added, "China really has the ultimate Kevin Falcon government structure," which produced even more laughter from the audience. He went on to say that the Chinese "... don't have the labour or environmental restrictions we do. It's not like they have to do community consultations. They just say 'we're building a bridge' and they move everyone out of there and get going within two weeks. Could you imagine if we could build like that?"

Ha ha ha, imagine that. Stop it, Kevin, you're killing us.

Another telling item involves Vancouver's 2010 Countdown Clock, located downtown across from the Vancouver Art Gallery. This wedge-like, metal and plexiglass construction stands more than six metres high and three metres wide and weighs over 2,600 pounds. It resembles something designed in the '70s by bell bottom-wearing futurists. It's easy to imagine it as an upright sarcophagus

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Margaret Mead

for Dr. Evil, or something excreted by a 300-foot, Fisher-Price robot. There's something totalitarian-looking about this blocky timepiece, and there's good reason for that. It's virtually the same clock as the one in Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

As reported last February in the *Georgia Straight*, VANOC chairman John Furlong explained the genesis of Vancouver's countdown clock in a speech at a Board of Trade-organized luncheon. "We were in Beijing a few years ago for a debriefing," Furlong told the audience. "We took a walk to Tiananmen Square and we saw the countdown clock in Tiananmen Square, which is beautiful. So we pulled out our cell phones and we phoned back to Vancouver, photographed it [the clock] – I don't even know if you're allowed – and we sent it back to Vancouver and said, 'We have to get ourselves one of these.' And today we have it, and it's very special."

Tiananmen Square's troubling past, involving a democratic uprising and its violent repression, appear to have been utterly lost on Furlong and his Olympic pals. Decades ago, Red China was demonized in the West for its human rights violations, which carry on in full force today. Yet ever since Red China became a card-carrying member of the WTO, and valued supplier to the US consumer market, any ethical concerns beyond poisoned pet food and toxic children's' toys are considered almost laughably irrelevant.

Whether it's East or West, wherever you find politicking, privatizing and profiteering, it all comes down to a struggle by people who are doing their best to get ahead. "It's just been a monumental stress," says Heyes of her battle for compensation. The level of bullying within liberal government itself... I think Campbell is a bully, Falcon a bully." Is this sense of fighting against bullies something she's always had, I ask? Does a sense of injustice come naturally to her?

"I don't believe you really know what you are capable of in a certain situation until you are in it. Yes, I've always jumped in to support the little guy. I've had bullying experiences in my life, in one way or another. Or where there's been unfairness. I can't tolerate it, and in a democracy, we shouldn't have to tolerate this kind of unfairness from our government."

Heyes says she gets phone calls from her neighbours in the street who are "... just sobbing into the phone," and she does what she can to help, funnelling their calls to city councillors, MLAs, the City engineering department, and whoever will listen.

"It's the same sort of thing you do with your children. If my daughter were being bullied in this way, I'd want to see justice done, I would want to bring the parties together and mediate. It isn't a matter of protesting just to be radical. It's that this particular issue has an easy fix: compensation. The fact that they've done nothing is really unconscionable. They are just attacking people who are tax paying citizens; all of us have paid our dues. You know, we've started small businesses; we're the very thing that this province wants to celebrate and they're shooting us down.

"They brought this disaster to our doors. They are capitalizing on it. They refused to factor financial relief into the project for the well known impacts of choosing to build this the way they have. This is not what should happen in a democracy."

Heyes still seems remarkably upbeat, given the battle she's chosen, or that has chosen her. She, and perhaps many others, will have their day in court this year. As for the ongoing sacrifices to our pending Olympic peak experience – an image comes to mind of bodies thrown into a volcano – we can't just wait for the judgment of history.

"Compensation is the right thing to do," Heyes insists.

mwiseguise@yahoo.com

Bridging the divide

FILMS WORTH WATCHING

Robert Alstead

The Band's Visit (*Bikur Ha-Tizmoret*), out on the 8th, is both a touching and a touch absurd comedy that offers a happier than usual take on current Arab-Israeli relations. When an eight-member, touring, Egyptian police orchestra find themselves lost in a dead-end Israeli town – the wrong town – the band leader reluctantly accepts hospitality from the locals. This is a place that, as the husky, divorcee bar owner Dina (Ronit Elkabetz) puts it, has "… no Arab culture, no Israeli culture, no culture at all." The group are billeted to various homes, where awkward, amusing and sometimes touching scenarios play out between visitors and hosts.

The film maintains a pleasingly sparse and understated quality throughout. Writer-director Eran Kolirin likes his long takes, which both imbue the film with a strong sense of place and are particularly effective in a musical number late in the film. Kolirin studiously avoids venturing into the minefield of political, head-on debate, instead playing on the humorous possibilities of communication problems and how individuals from different cultures break the ice.

The film focuses, in particular, on the difference between two of the band members – the reserved band leader Tawfiq (Sasson Gabai), painfully self-conscious of the ambassadorial role of his small orchestra, and his younger counterpart violinist Haled (Saleh Bakri), a smooth-talking Romeo – and how they respond to the sensual Dina, who they are billeted with. Part of the enjoyment of the film is watching Tawfiq's buttoned-up formality melt away in her company. There's also a hilarious scene at a roller-disco where Haled offers instructions to an awkward local lad about how to make advances on a girl. Some of the "second fiddlers" of the cast would have been better painted-in, seeming to serve merely as the butt of various jokes. But this slight film is a memorable one with an enjoyable soundtrack.

Still from **The Band's Visit (Bikur Ha-Tizmoret)**

Interestingly, *The Band's Visit* was initially Israel's entry into the Oscars this year, until it was deemed ineligible on the grounds that there was too much English spoken in it for it to qualify as a foreign film. English is the one language that both nationals speak, although not always well, so it comprises more than 50 percent of the dialogue. Consequently, Israel entered *Beaufort,* a tense military drama, instead.

When Did You Last See Your Father, out on the 29th, is a British drama about a son reconciling himself with his dying father. The film moves fluidly between different time frames from a sensitive youth, played by Matthew Beard, whose feelings are crushed when dad tactlessly humiliates him in front of potential girlfriends, to adulthood where, as a successful author, played by Colin Firth, he still finds himself cringing with embarrassment and fuming at his father's blind bombast and transgressions. The film has a very British sensibility with its stoical family relations and understated emotions. That's a feeling further enhanced by shots of classic, English countryside settings, such as the scene wherein father and son embark on a doomed camping trip together.

The film is a slow-burner, without the typical, big, emotional confrontation between son and dad over a long-hidden family secret at the end that you might expect from a Hollywood movie. But thanks to some brilliant performances, it's still one that gently tugs at the heart strings. Jim Broadbent, as the roguish, high-spirited patriarch, and Juliet Stevenson as the forgiving, long-suffering wife, give particularly memorable performances.

Michel Gondry returns to the similar territory of his hit *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* with *Be Kind, Rewind* out on the 22nd, except instead of erasing minds, he's erasing video tapes. The goofy premise is that Jerry (Jack Black), whose brain has become magnetized, accidentally wipes out all the films in his friend's (Mos Def) video store. When they decide, as their unlikely solution, to remake the classic Hollywood fare themselves, their roughly hewn DIY versions fool no one, but the tapes become surprise hits in the local community.

The first must-see movie of the year seems to be the teenage pregnancy comedy *Juno*, with a performance by 20-year-old Nova Scotian Ellen Page in a lead role that has been widely tipped for an Oscar. (The Academy Award nominations haven't been announced at time of writing.) The film, which is both sweet and sharp-witted, fools around with your expectations of how people would react in what for many would be a traumatic situation, starting with the decision by the wise-cracking 16-year-old Juno to find a couple to adopt her unborn child because she doesn't feel mature enough to be a parent. The film, shot in Vancouver on a relatively low budget, has become a box office smash hit. One to see if you haven't already.

Robert Alstead made the Vancouver-set bicycle documentary You Never Bike Alone*, available on DVD at www.youneverbikealone.com*

Mini nukes cont. from p. 7

Worse still is the "terrorist" lurking in the structural quality of the materials used in these petite power generators, which contain enough radioactive uranium and various fission products and transuranics to cause cancer in tens of thousands of people, perhaps even millions, if the radioactive material were to be released because of an earthquake, tornado, tsunami, terrorist, poor workmanship, poor materials, poor design, etc.

In addition to these "baby nukes," Toshiba also wants to introduce a line of midsize nukes, called the 4S series, which the manufacturer says is "Super, Safe, Small, Simple" with fuel-enriched to 19.9 percent U-235. (Highly enriched uranium, by convention, is enriched to 20.0 percent or more U-235.) The new 200-kilowatt nukes are said to be small versions of the 4S design.

Techno-nerds' reactions to the new reactors on the Internet would make you think these were puppy dog friendly, could-never-harm-a-flea energy sources, but the articles are written by computer "geeks," who know nothing about nuclear waste issues, terrorism or economics. They just love the idea of "unlimited" cheap power, but they need to look a little deeper under the hood before they endorse these things.

Toshiba is also involved, along with General Electric, in large BWRs. In October 2006, Toshiba purchased what used to be called Westinghouse from British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. (BNFL) for about $5.4 billion, adding PWR manufacturing and support to its portfolio. Toshiba's purchase of Westinghouse, of which only the nuclear division still existed, possibly prevented a perfectly appropriate bankruptcy of BNFL, which had bought the ailing Westinghouse in 1999 for about $1.1 billion.

Mainly through its new Westinghouse subsidiary, Toshiba now has half a dozen different reactor designs it is certifying with nuclear agencies around the world – with almost zero public scrutiny. Nuclear reactors and equipment for those reactors (and for other reactors) accounts for about 25 percent of Toshiba's business. Toshiba's nuclear ambitions will unfortunately mean more business for Toshiba's Computed Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance (MR) machines, which it sells to hospitals to diagnose the very diseases Toshiba's new nuclear reactors will cause.

As the writer of this article, I ask readers to boycott Toshiba. Boycott Toshiba laptops, Toshiba camcorders, Toshiba hard drives, Toshiba telephone systems and Toshiba DVD players. Return Toshiba gifts you received. Remove Toshiba stock from your portfolio. Bankrupt the company if necessary. Stop its ability to produce and distribute mini nukes. Our health depends on it.

Russell Hoffman is an award-winning educational software developer. He has investigated nuclear power for more than three decades and frequently writes about the numerous hidden hazards of nuclear energy, and the potential benefits to humanity of a switch to renewable technologies in combination with a global energy grid. 760-720-7261, rhoffman@animatedsoftware.com, www.animatedsoftware.com

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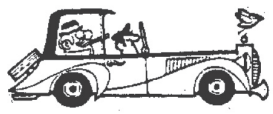

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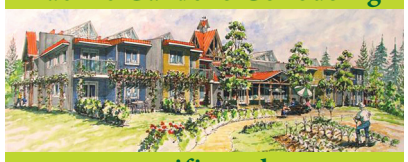

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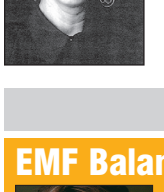

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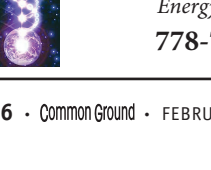

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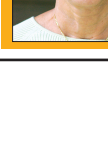

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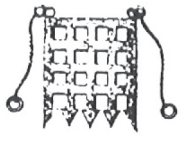

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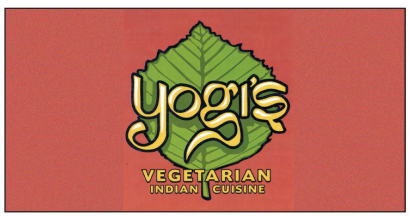

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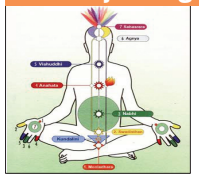

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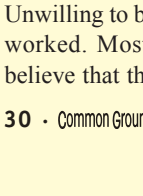

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In war, truth is the first casualty.
~ Aeschylus ~
Greek playwright form 500 BC

Canada's secret war in Iraq

by Richard Sanders

How easy it is to make people believe a lie, and how hard it is to undo that work again! – Mark Twain

On March 25, 2003, during the "shock and awe" bombardment of Iraq, then US Ambassador Paul Cellucci admitted that "… ironically, Canadian naval vessels, aircraft and personnel... will supply more support to this war in Iraq indirectly... than most of those 46 countries that are fully supporting our efforts there."

Cellucci merely scratched the surface of Canada's initial "support" for the Iraq War, but he had let the cat out of the bag. As then Secretary of State Colin Powell had explained a week earlier, "We now have a coalition of the willing… who have publicly said they could be included in such a listing.... And there are 15 other nations, who, for one reason or another, do not wish to be publicly named but will be supporting the coalition."

Canada was, and still is, the leading member of this secret group, which we could perhaps call CW-HUSH, the "Coalition of the Willing to Help but Unwilling to be Seen Helping." The plan worked. Most Canadians still proudly believe that their government refused to join the Iraq War. Nothing could be further from the truth. Here are some of the ways in which we joined the fray:

Escorting the US Navy: Thirteen hundred Canadian troops aboard Canada's multibillion dollar warships escorted the US fleet through the Persian Gulf, putting them safely in place to bomb Iraq.

Leading the coalition Navy: Canadian troops. He was Second-in-Command of the entire Iraq War for that year. When Governor General Clarkson gave Natynczyk the Meritorious Service Cross, her office extolled his "pivotal role in the development of numerous plans and operations [which] resulted in a tremendous contribution… to Operation Iraqi Freedom, and… brought great credit to the Canadian Forces and to Canada."

US Ambassador Paul Cellucci admitted that "… ironically, Canadian naval vessels, aircraft and personnel... will supply more support to this war in Iraq indirectly... than most of those 46 countries that are fully supporting our efforts there."

Rear Admiral Roger Girouard was in charge of the war coalition's fleet.

Providing war planners: At least two dozen Canadian war planners working at US Central Command in Florida were transferred to the Persian Gulf in early 2003 to help oversee the war's complicated logistics.

Commanding the war: In 2004, Canadian Brigadier General Walt Natynczyk commanded 10 brigades totalling 35,000

Helping coordinate the war: Canadian military personnel working aboard American E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System warplanes helped direct the electronic war by providing surveillance, command, control and communications services to US war fighters.

Providing airspace and refuelling: Countless US troop and equipment transport aircraft have flown over Canada, to and from the Iraq War, and many refuelled in Gander, Newfoundland.

Providing air transport: At least three Canadian CC-130 military transport planes were listed by US military to supply coalition forces during the Iraq War.

Freeing up US troops: Canada's major role in Afghan war has freed up thousands of US troops for deployment to Iraq.

Providing ground troops: At least 35 Canadian soldiers were directly under US command, in an "exchange" capacity on the ground, participating in the invasion of Iraq.

Testing weapons and drones: Two types of cruise missiles (AGM-86 and -129) and the "Global Hawk" (RQ-4A) surveillance drone, used in Iraq, were tested over Canada.

Depleted uranium (DU) weapons: Canada is the world's top exporter of uranium. Our government pretends that Canada's uranium is sold for "peaceful" purposes only, but absolutely nothing is done to stop the US from using DU in their weapons. America's A-10 Wart Hog warplanes have fired DU munitions in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq, while each cruise missile contains three kgs of DU ballast.

continued on p. 18

Canada sells RADARSAT to US weapons and space industry

by Richard Sanders

Richmond-based MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates (MDA) is selling off its space divisions to a US war industry giant called Alliant Techsystems (ATK). It got a whopping $1.325 billion (in cash) and its stock immediately skyrocketed.

Just before Christmas, MDA's pride and joy, RADARSAT-2, the world's most advanced "synthetic aperture radar" satellite, was finally blasted into space.

MDA has been the proud owner and controller of RADARSAT-2, since the Government of Canada generously handed this publicly-funded satellite over to the company. About 90 percent of this satellite system's $1 billion cost, including $500 million for RADARSAT-2 alone, was paid for by Canadian citizens. Then, thanks to the Liberal government's obeisance to the god of privatization, RADARSAT was generously transferred to MDA.

This isn't the first time MDA has been owned by US war industry. Back when (then Liberal) David Emerson was on MDA's board of directors, the company was owned by a US "missile defence" rocket maker called Orbital Sciences.

ATK, the new owner of "Canada's" satellite, touts itself as "an advanced weapon and space system company." ATK has its fingers in everything from "missile defence" rocket motors to small arms. It says it's America's "largest producer of commercial and military ammunition and a leading provider of gun systems." And now, it will control RADARSAT-2, which is likely Canada's single greatest technological contribution to the US war machine.

But Canadians have little sense of their real role in the US wars. In fact, most Canadians still suffer from the delusion that their government said "no" to Ballistic Missile Defence and the Iraq War. Canadians don't even know how much MDA paid for RADARSAT-2 because MDA's contract with the Government of Canada is secret. In a parliamentary committee in 2005, Liberals and Conservatives voted against an NDP-Bloc motion to allow MPs to view the contract. That would be bad for business, the Liberals said; the Conservatives agreed.

What's more, the Liberal's RADARSAT Bill (C-25) has a secret annex that even MPs were not allowed to read before voting on it.

The US military already had its hands on RADARSAT-1 through something called "Eagle Vision," a "family" of portable ground stations. Eagle Vision is "a cornerstone of the [US] military's commercial imagery exploitation" (See *SIGNAL Magazine*, March 2001, http://cartome.org/battle-fusion.htm) It allows them to directly control RADARSAT-1 and -2 and downlink its data to soldiers on the battlefield.

RADARSAT-1 was used in NATO's bombardment of Yugoslavia in 1999 and in the Afghan war since 2001. Regarding Eagle Vision's use in Iraq, a Pentagon source said: "It's doing great things... It's working like gangbusters" (See http://search.space.com, March 31, 2003). NATO and US war planners have also been planning for RADARSAT-2's role in pre-emptive first strikes that are part of so-called "missile defence." (It's called "missile defence" because its real purpose is to defend US missiles from attack during foreign wars.) RADARSAT-2's revolutionary GMTI technology will be especially useful if the US ever manages to fabricate a suitable pretext for launching air strikes against Iran. All this may come as news to Canadians who have been told that RADARSAT-2 is just a hot new tool for monitoring rapidly-melting ice caps and other casualties of global warming. Truth is, Canada's new and improved "eye in the sky" is firmly ensconced in the US warfighter's arsenal and that it will soon be used in the very hot wars of Iraq and Afghanistan.

RADARSAT-2's prime military role hinges on what warplanners, in their love for acronyms, call MAJIIC. For those uninitiated in the sacred rites of war, that stands for the "Multi-sensor Aerospace-ground Joint ISR Interoperability Coalition." ISR, the acronym buried in MAJIIC, refers to "Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance." You can't win a war without ISR. It is as essential as the weapons, the war budget, an enemy, a taxpaying public duped into footing the bill and a media that promotes and then covers up the whole fraudulent operation. With the right shills, a willing mark and crafty, fast-talking conmen to pull off the scam, it's a grifter's dream come true. But back to the sleight of hand trick they call MAJIIC. On January 3, 2008, *Aviation Week* ran an article that begins: "A nine-nation intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) project sponsored by NATO is yielding 'powerful new technologies that soon could be deployed to Afghanistan.'"

And Canada, of course, is deeply embedded in this MAJIIC, which is devoted to "developing standards and technologies that will allow NATO commanders to instantly tap into real-time data from a number of NATO and national systems." These "systems," NATO tells us, include a "wide array of air, ground and *space surveillance assets*" which will "provide commanders with a single, coherent and detailed picture of what's happening on the ground."

This isn't the first time MDA has been owned by US war industry. Back when (then Liberal) David Emerson was on MDA's board of directors, the company was owned by a US "missile defence" rocket maker called Orbital Sciences.

Canada's state-of-the-art-of-war satellite system is the shining new jewel in this MAJIIC crown. In fact, RADARSAT was offered up to NATO even before MAJIIC, through CAESAR (Coalition Aerial Surveillance and Reconnaissance) which emerged in the mid-'90s. It was through this project that Canada decided to give unto CAESAR that which is CAESAR's. In various NATO "war games," involving thousands of real troops and billions worth of real weapons systems, Canada rendered up simulated RADARSAT-2 data in preparation for the day when NATO warfighters could download real data from our satellites for real-time use in live wars.

That day has finally arrived.

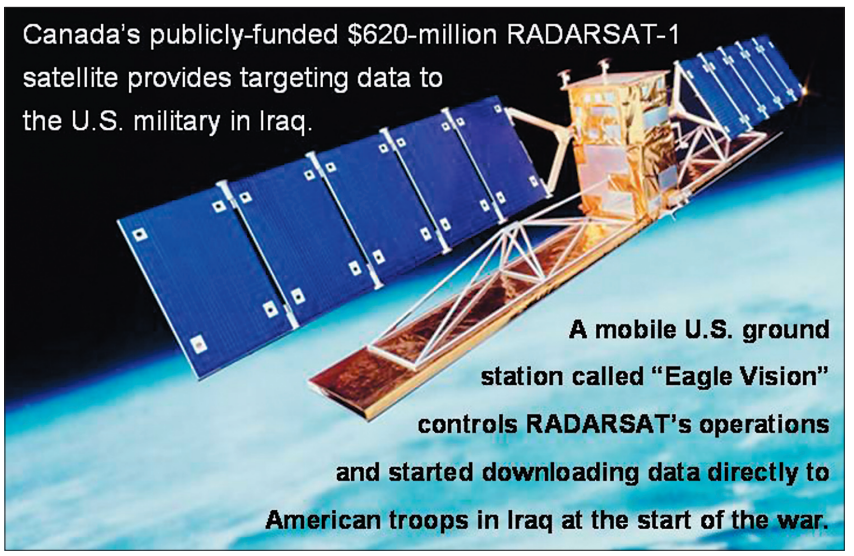
Victims on the ground – those at the receiving end of the weapons systems targeted with RADARSAT-2 data – will presumably not know what hit them. And along with their friends and family, they also won't know that Canadian technology was involved, or that Canadians paid for it with their taxes.

But what about Canadians? Will our fellow citizens notice this country's contribution to the US military's technological revolution? In one of his more lucid moments, Canada's Major-General Andrew Leslie, then military Commander in Afghanistan, said, "Every time you kill an angry young man overseas, you're creating 15 more who will come after you." By that logic, it's better if Canada's victims don't know who to blame. Perhaps that's exactly how we Canadians want it. Perhaps we want the world – and ourselves – to remain blissfully ignorant of Canada's deep complicity in the global business of war. That way, if any "terrorists" ever go looking for revenge because neighbourhoods in their country were levelled during a US-led war, they won't know enough to look for targets in Canada.

By trying to burst the enduring and widespread myth that Canada is the great peacekeeper, are antiwar activists aiding and abetting the enemy?

Unfortunately it seems that Canada's secret is still good. Of the hundreds of news stories about the sale of MDA to ATK only a handful even mentioned RADARSAT. And, of course, because RADARSAT's numerous military uses are rarely mentioned, Canada's phoney reputation as a peacemaker remains intact for another day.

*For more information, see "*Canada's Role in the Militarization of Space: RADARSAT – The Warfighters' Eye in the Sky and its links to 'Missile Defence*," Issue 58,* Press for Conversion! *www.coat.ncf.ca*


Canada's publicly-funded $620-million RADARSAT-1 satellite provides targeting data to the U.S. military in Iraq.
A mobile U.S. ground station called "Eagle Vision" controls RADARSAT's operations and started downloading data directly to American troops in Iraq at the start of the war.

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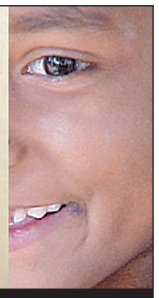

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FEB 1-3
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FEB 7
Naked Yoga for Men with Ron Stewart, $15, Nanaimo, Thursday, 7-8:30PM. Hatha Yoga as nature intended (more info: skyclad.com).
Pre-Register: www.crimsoncoastdance.org

FEB 8
Traces of Emily Carr: Malaspina University Theatre, Nanaimo 7:30PM. Original, Live Music by Veda Hille and Band, Workshops with and for artists!
Info: www.crimsoncoastdance.org or 250-716-3230.

FEB 9
Shamanic Drumming & Dreaming Circle: Saturday, 7-10PM. Learn to experience insight/healing from your Nature Spirit Totem guardians. At Vancouver Multi-Cultural Society, 1254 W. 7th. By donation. Earthsong Healing Circles. 604.418.9636, www.shamanichealing.info

FEB 9
7th Annual Chicken and Egg Dance for the Future of Organic Farming: 6-11PM, Capri Hall, 3925 Fraser St. @ King Edward. Advance: $12/adults, $6/12 yrs. & under. Door: $15/$7.50. Call Susan for outlet info: 604-857-1400, www.organics.bc.ca

FEB 9
Gaelic Lessons: 10.30AM, Scottish Cultural Centre, 70th/Hudson. Info: Sandra 604-724-6911.

FEB 10
"Transformation of Man" series: Tape 2 of 7 with Krishnamurti-philosopher, Bohm-physicist, Shainberg-psychiatrist. 4PM, open dialogue 5:30-7:15PM. MacMillan Planetarium, Donation. (Tape 3/7 March 9.) Information: 604-734-7774.

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Visit www.clientattractingwebsites.com

FEB 20
The Joy of Stress: A must for everyone going through the stresses of today's fast paced world, 7PM. VPL, $15. Register: www.plan.ca or 604-439-9566.

FEB 20
Planetary Peace Meditation: Join us for this powerful meditation held on the full moon, Feb 20th at 7:30PM. 2950 Laurel St, Vancouver. www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver.htm

FEB 22-24
Agama Yoga Retreat all levels welcome: Join us on beautiful Galiano Island for Yoga, meditation, lectures, films and friends. vancouver@agamayoga.ca www.agamayoga.ca, 778-829-9628.

FEB 22-24
A precious opportunity: The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche teaches on Universal Love (The Four Immeasurables). Also, join with Rinpoche for an Avalokiteshvara Empowerment and a fundraising dinner for Maitrivana, Vancouver's newest Buddhist meditation and study centre. All welcome. Register early for savings: http://vancouver.nalandabodhi.ca

FEB 27
MSF/ Doctors Without Borders presentation/slide show featuring Dr. Maureen Mayhew's volunteer work in Afghanistan and DR Congo, 7-8PM,
St. Paul's Hospital, 1081 Burrard St., Level 1, Conference Centre, Room 1477.

FEB 29 - MAR 1
16th annual Women's Spirituality Celebration @ Canadian Memorial Church. "Nurturing Spirit: Connecting Self~Community~Earth." Arts & self-inquiry workshops, community gathering. $105 before 15th. 604-301-3120.

FEB 29 – MAR 2
Basic Holistic Foot Reflexology Introduction commences certificate weekend course. Intro: $10, Course $325. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

MAR 4
Grand Opening Event for new Holistic Health Centre: Access Natural Healing, 11-4pm. 10% off First Homeopathic Consultation. #101-1416 Commercial Drive. 778-549-5997, www.accessnaturalhealing.com

MAR 6-9
4-day Theta Healing Workshop & Retreat with Instructor Loretta Mohl. Training covers Basic and Advanced Theta Healing. Location: Cascadia Centre Roberts Creek, www.thinkthetahealing.com
Loretta, 780-910-5052.

MAR 12
Gabor Maté discusses his most recent book, In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters With Addiction. Host: Dr. Bruce Alexander, Professor, SFU, 7:30PM, Saint Andrew's-Wesley, 1022 Nelson @ Burrard. Min. Donation: $5.

MAR 12 - MAY 28
Dru Yoga Classes: 7-9PM, The Peace Centre, 16th @ Burrard – Mar. 12, 19, 26; Apr. 2, 9; May 7, 14, 21, 28.

MAR 21-24
Easter Celebration Retreat: Celebrate Easter with spiritual focus. Special Meditations, singing, sharing. Walks to beaches, lake, forest. Self Realization Meditation Healing Centre, Sunshine Coast 1-604-740-0898.

MAR 24
Past Life Regression: Experience a fascinating journey into your PAST for more understanding of your PRESENT. 535 West 10th Ave, 7PM, $75. Pre-registration www.lifebetweenlives.ca, 1-888-606-8463.

MAR 29, APR 12, MAY 10
Dru Yoga Workshops: St Marks Church, Larch Street at 2nd Ave. Register: 604-263-4432 or 604-936-3255 or canada@druworldwide.com
Details www.druworldwide.com/canada

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MAY 2
Dr. George Carlo, PhD presents a talk on health hazards of cell phones, cell towers & EMFs & signs of electro-sensitivity and how to deal with it. 7-9PM, Saint Andrew's-Wesley, 1022 Nelson @ Burrard.

JUL 13-19
Pure Meditation: Deepen your connection with the Divine. Answer all spiritual and mortal concerns. Taught by direct disciple of Mata Yogananda. SRMH Centre, Sunshine Coast, 1-604-740-0898.

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International Spiritualist Alliance: #201-317 Columbia Street, New West, 604-521-6336. Sunday services, 11AM. Rev. Joyce Tarvin, 604-433-6663, www.isacanada.ca. See Resource Directory ad.

SOS (Science of Spirituality): See Resource Directory listing in Spiritual Practices for schedule in Richmond, Vancouver & Victoria. 604-277-1247. All Welcome. www.sos.org

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MONDAYS

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TUESDAYS

Children of War fundraiser at Chai Gallery at East is East, 4413 Main St. @ 28, 7:30PM-1:30AM, 604-879-2020. See Wed. listing for more info. www.thechildrenofwar.org.

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Please contact Janet Mierau
at 604.921.6981 or jmierau@telus.net

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Classifieds

Prize-winning Scottish choir seeks new members: Non-Gaelic speakers welcome. No audition required. Scottish/Gaelic traditional songs. Practice: 7:45PM, Scottish Cultural Centre, 70th/Hudson, Sandra 604-724-6911.

Free Geek Monthly Meeting, second Tues. of every month, 6:30-8:30PM, 1820 Pandora St. www.freegeekvancouver.org

Free Talks: What Homeopathy Can Do For You – 7-8PM, Feb. 5, 12, 19 & 26, Access Natural Healing, 101-1416 Commercial Drive. 10 people per session. 778-549-5997, el@accessnaturalhealing.com

WEDNESDAYS

Speaking Circles: Learn to speak naturally in front of groups, transforming anxiety into the excitement of creative expression through relational presence. 7:30-9:30PM, Dave 604-488-9203.

Hawaiian Medicine Circle: 7PM. Hawaiian guided meditation, Sharing the Aloha, tea and snacks. $10 donation. At Hale Ola, 1215 Madison Ave., Burnaby. 604-431-7474. Call Kumu Kaimana.

Children of War fundraiser: At Chai Gallery, upstairs at East is East. Local musicians & traditional dancers, 7:30PM-1:30AM, 3243 W. Broadway. $25/door 778-837-1862, www.thechildrenofwar.org.

LINUX Clinic & Windowsless Wednesdays: 7-9:30PM, 1820 Pandora, www.freegeekvancouver.org

FRIDAYS

"Destiny Dialogues" Free Talks (7-9PM). First Friday of each month, experiential evening that explores the inter-connections between destiny and: suffering, relationships, vocations, joy, teachers, character, nature, family, dreams. Call Michael 604-317-1613 to RSVP.

Give Peace a Chant! Kirtan - Yoga of Sound: Call and response style chanting in a friendly community setting. No experience necessary. 7:30PM, 2111 W.16th Ave. @ Arbutus www.givepeaceachant.org

ONGOING

Free Meditation Workshop: Experience Kundalini awakening through Sahaja Yoga, as taught by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi & enjoy your Powers at our Weekly classes, always free and open to all. 604-597-8440, www.sahajayoga.org.

Free Mental Wellness Self-Help Support Group: Kitsilano area. Saturdays, bi-weekly, 10:30AM-12:30PM, 604-630-6865.

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On Track Zodiac

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ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)
The language of love speaks to you as you put an ear to the heavens and ask for what you will. There could be more encounters to both excite your taste buds and help you create a more fearless journey. Few know the depths of your innocence and vulnerability. You are exposed yet secure.

TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)
You may feel boundless energy and recognize the places where you can use it. It is full steam ahead as the heavenly bodies conspire to shine a light on your path. The high calibre of your efforts should bring reward and fulfillment.

GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)
Having an identity crisis? You can maintain constancy within while you revolutionize your work place and the ways in which you communicate. You are evolving faster than a comet in the midst of effective change. As demanding as it may be, finish what you start. Great ones never cave in to defeat.

CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)
To dream is stellar, but to accomplish that which you set out to do is triumphant. In the face of present obstacles, you can aim, design and lay out the ground work for your next significant venture. Hit the target in your minds eye and the essence will explode into meaning.

LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)
If you find stress has been added to your daily diet, could it be that you are sticking your neck out? Now is a good time to pull your energies in just a bit if you feel stiff and inflexible. The body follows the mind and it's just an oversight to forget this. Creativity is always yours.

VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)
Various electrical and plug-in devices could throw a few sparks and seem to have a will of their own. Check your outlets and get your wiring organized because anything that could blow a fuse just might. The same holds true for your health and your environment. Get on track with your health.

LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)
Charming Libra often seems kind and friendly; could cunning lie beneath the façade? Perhaps you are seeking to become more curious and are looking for more stimuli. Brimming with a fervour you may not have felt for a while, you go where you dared not in the past.

SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)
You may find you desire a pious and deep examination of your life. If anyone could write a treatise on loneliness, it's you, but you are more aware of the deeper meaning of the soul's journey now. The intendment of your life is before you with all the signs pointing the way.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21)
The past is the past and the only road to follow now is the one laid out in front of you. Bygones are bygones. Perhaps, to avoid furthering any negative sentiment, you might wish to improve your relationships now. You have turned a corner.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19)
You will have a chance to express your usual subdued emotions and communicate clearly. Not known for exuding sentiment, you find an outlet for a pent-up interior life. Although you love your privacy, you bring more people into your fold.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)
You could find a new spark igniting your love life. Whether you are single, capricious or in partnership of the devoted kind, you wish for new depths to your emotional life and it happens with abundance.

PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)
Your birthday could hold more significance this year. Balance and perspective seem abundant and things are falling into place. You are no longer concerned with the small stuff. Big improvements in your confidence and conviction allow you to ditch bad influences.

Adrien Dilon is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 33 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing, adrien.dilon@gmail.com, members.shaw.ca/adrien.dilon

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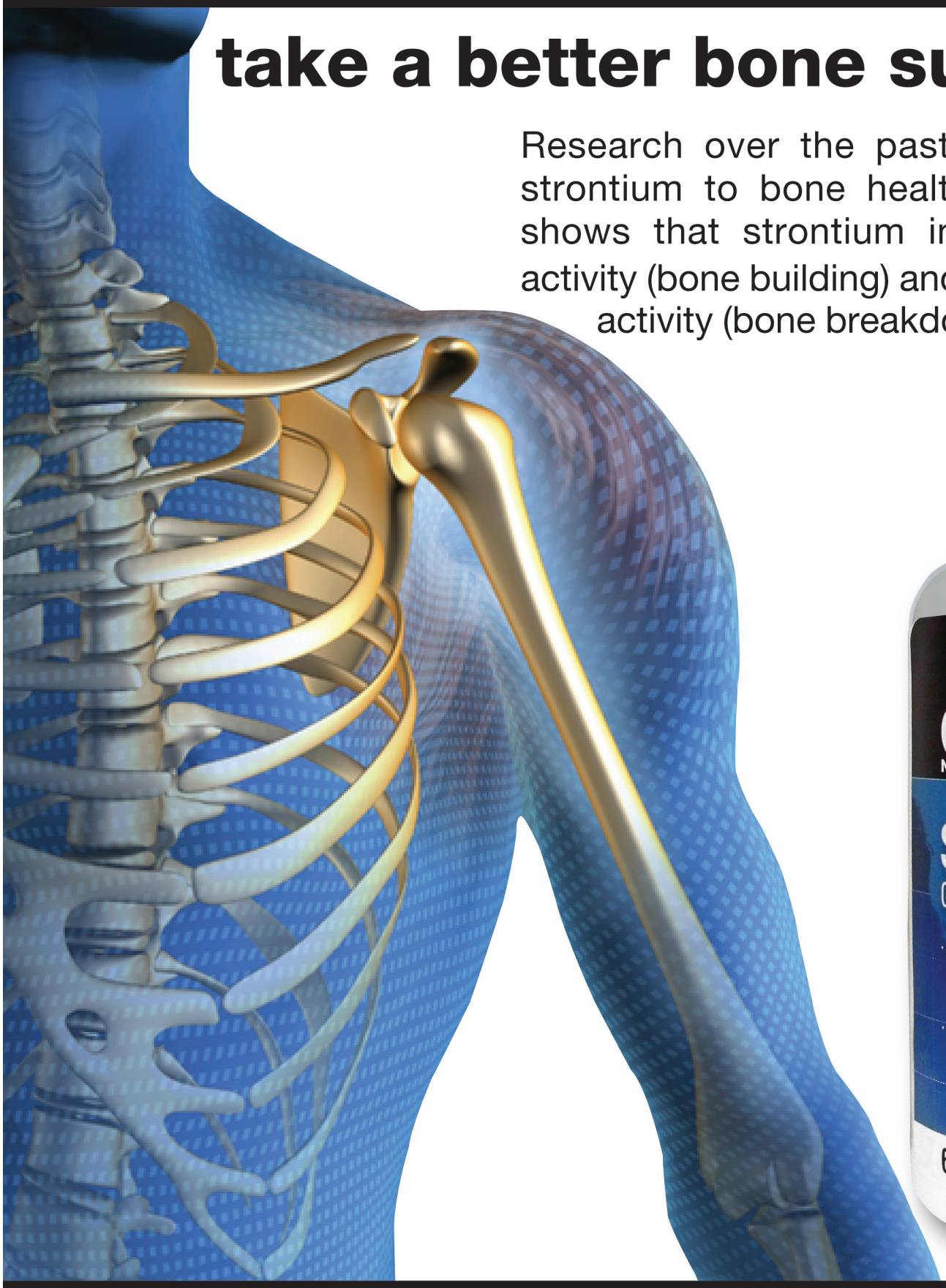

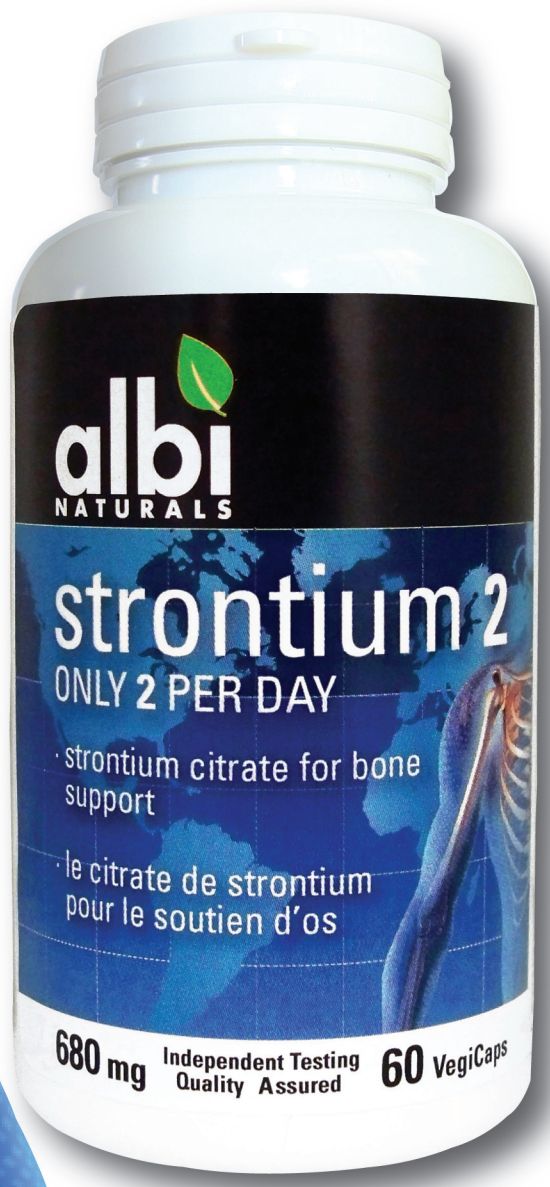

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